

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY NATHAN-PULLIAM

• Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, today I wish to recognize and pay tribute to a dear friend, fellow Marylander and 16-year member of the Maryland House of Delegates, Shirley Nathan-Pulliam. Shirley has been a tireless advocate for eliminating health disparities throughout her career as a public servant. The Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene is appropriately honoring her on October 4 by announcing the establishment of the "Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Lecture Series" at this year's annual Maryland Health Disparity Conference.

Shirley has strong convictions and has often stated: "In a country as rich and powerful as the United States of America, no person should be without a basic plan of health care." As a registered nurse and former faculty associate at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, Shirley has seen firsthand how minorities are disproportionately harmed by certain diseases and the inequality in care across racial and ethnic lines. Her belief that health care is a basic human right, and not a privilege, has compelled her to serve in public office—a decision that has benefited all Marylanders and has helped improve health equality in our State.

Shirley has had many successes as a legislator, but one of the most important has been her work in establishing the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities in 2004. This office is charged with promoting health equity for African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other groups experiencing health disparities. Another key legislative accomplishment of Shirley's was her success in providing health care coverage to more than 100,000 children in Maryland.

Shirley is not a woman who idly witnesses society's inequities. Her compassion and empathy drive her to come up with solutions for the problems she sees. As a sponsor or cosponsor of hundreds of bills that have been signed into law, Shirley has been instrumental in improving the lives of Marylanders in countless ways. When Shirley discovered Maryland had the third highest oral cancer rate for African-American men in the Nation, she secured \$500,000 to fight the disease. She also was lead sponsor of legislation providing \$2.6 million annually for breast cancer treatment for low-income women living in Maryland.

Shirley has been an indispensable partner and an inspiration in my efforts to address health disparities at the federal level. We worked together to codify the National Institute for Minority Health and Health Disparities, correcting a long-standing bias in our health care system that was ill-equipped to deal with disparities among different populations.

I wish the University of Maryland's Center for Health Equity and the State Office of Minority Health great success in their stewardship of the "Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Lecture Series." There is still a great deal of work to be done in achieving Shirley's dream of erasing health disparities and making health care a right for every human being. But with her leadership and legacy to follow, I am confident her dream will one day become a reality.●

ST. PETER'S CENTENNIAL

• Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, on October 16, 1911, the first Italian Catholic congregation in the city of Portland, ME, met under the guidance of Father Agnello Santagnello. Seventy-five families came together, and plans were laid to build a church for the small but growing community of new Americans.

Before year's end, just in time for Christmas mass, an old stable was transformed into a chapel at a cost of just under \$2,800 and much hard work. That modest chapel was named St. Peter's—the rock of the Church on the rocky coast of Maine.

By the mid-1920s, the parish numbered nearly 1,000 families and the thriving Italian-American community needed a larger spiritual home. Father Teresio DiMingo, who took the reins of the congregation in 1927, went house-to-house throughout Portland's Little Italy neighborhood soliciting funds, and found generosity at every door.

The new church was under construction in 1929 when disaster struck—the stock market crash and the ensuing Great Depression. Father DiMingo returned the contributions to those in need. He matched that act of compassion with determination, and continued the construction with his own life savings.

The Church of St. Peter was dedicated that August. That great celebration included the blessing of Father DiMingo's second great gift to his parish—a cross made from fragments of the True Cross.

Since that day, worshipers have noticed a curious inscription above the doorway—the letters "L & L." That was yet another gift from Father DiMingo. Those letters represent the Latin words for "him" and "her." St. Peter's was then, and is today, a church for families.

Today, in this centennial year, the families of St. Peter's continue to build on that solid foundation. Their vibrant church remains a rock of faith.

And it grows as a center of charity and caring. In the early 1950s, an Italian priest came to America seeking aid for children orphaned during the Second World War. The generous response from Portland led to the founding of the Italian Heritage Center, which continues to enrich the city with a culture of great food, music, and festivals.

That a small fellowship of faith was born in a stable and grew into a something mighty and lasting is more than powerful symbolism. It is a testament to the spirit, the resolve, and the energy of Portland's Italian-American community. On the 100th anniversary of St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, I offer the members of that parish the traditional Italian wish for a long life of health and happiness—"Cent'anni!"●

MICHIGAN VOLUNTARISM

• Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, our Nation's veterans made enormous sacrifices in defense of our Nation through their military service. One of the many ways we recognize their service is through essential government programs that form the foundation of our Nation's promise to care for veterans. These programs are made stronger by the valuable contributions of volunteers. Volunteers who freely offer their time to improve the quality of life of American veterans provide a personal reminder that a grateful nation will always remember and value their sacrifice. This spirit of generosity and compassion is embodied at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans in west Michigan. A banquet to honor the positive impact these volunteers have had over the past year will take place on September 27, 2011.

In operation since 1886, the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans is a 758-bed home for veterans in need of long-term care. Residents are cared for by a professional staff of doctors, nurses and social workers, all of whom tirelessly work to fulfill the home's mission of providing quality interdisciplinary care and helping residents "achieve their highest potential of independence, self worth, wellness and dignity." Supporting the professional staff in these efforts is a capable and compassionate army of volunteers. In 2010 alone, almost 900 different volunteers served at the home, with approximately 200 volunteers putting in at least 100 hours of service. Some volunteers are veterans themselves; some are family members of current or past residents; others have no personal connection to the home other than the desire to help American heroes.

Volunteers provide a host of services for the veterans and hold events that improve the residents' quality of life. Perhaps the most essential service volunteers provide is something that most people take for granted: visiting with veterans individually, offering human companionship. For veterans in homes, especially the elderly or disabled, having someone read or play cards with them, or simply have a conversation with them can provide great comfort. In addition to providing a simple yet powerful human connection, volunteers ensure that veterans at the home live active lives by helping to run the home's woodshop, bowling alley and library, as well as escorting residents to painting and ceramics classes. Residents also enjoy the animal therapy

program where volunteers bring in their own pet dogs and cats.

Last year, volunteers organized a number of special events, including a Super Bowl Party, a Las Vegas Day, three fishing tournaments, a carnival, a fall harvest festival, and a Christmas celebration called the Veterans Star Christmas Project. As part of the project, volunteers distributed more than 700 donated gifts to residents on Christmas Day. According to one resident, the celebration was especially meaningful because "this kind of brightens our year, to know that there are people thinking about you, that care about you." Surely, that kind of reaction is all the reward volunteers want for their efforts. Every day, these generous and dedicated men and women show the residents of the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans that the American people have not forgotten them or their service to our Nation.

It is in this spirit of generosity that I know my colleagues will join me in recognizing and thanking all those who volunteered at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. The positive impact they have had on the lives of Michigan veterans is tremendous, and I extend my deepest appreciation for their service.●

TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR W. DIVENS, JR.

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, today I recognize an outstanding public servant and longstanding resident of the great State of Maryland, Arthur W. Divens, Jr., as he completes more than 31 years of continuous service within the civilian leadership of the Department of Defense. Mr. Divens began his public service life in naval shipbuilding as a project engineer/contracting representative for the Military Sealift Command and is ending it as executive director for the Amphibious Warfare and Sealift Office, Program Executive Office, Ships, where he oversees one of the broadest acquisition portfolios in the Navy—including more than \$30 billion in complex shipbuilding procurements. Highly respected throughout the DOD acquisition community as a visionary leader and a man of uncommon character, he has left a long and lasting legacy to our Nation—both through his unparalleled contributions to the strength and flexibility of our Navy's surface forces and through the generation of professionals that he has mentored throughout his time in Federal service. Today, it is my great pleasure to recognize his achievements and to thank him and his family for their service to the Navy and our Nation.

Mr. Divens has a long and distinguished career of innovative thinking and aggressive execution of shipbuilding programs across the entire spectrum of naval shipbuilding. He has been directly involved in the design, construction, or delivery of over 150 ships and over 1,000 small boats and craft, more than any other individual

in the Department of the Navy. Since joining Federal service in 1980 and the Senior Executive Service in 2000, he has held a variety of key leadership roles throughout his professional life, including positions with the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, the Military Sealift Command, and the Naval Sea Systems Command. He has also provided strong leadership to groups such as the National Shipbuilding Research Program and the Marine Engineering and Shipyard Management Program, where he has worked tirelessly with his peers throughout government and industry to promote the open interchange of ideas and information and constantly improve shipbuilding and ship repair processes and technology.

In 2002, Mr. Divens joined the Program Executive Office, Ships, where he has played a critical role in defining and fielding our Navy's future Surface Fleet. During his tenure and as a result of his sound stewardship, 31 ships have been delivered to the U.S. Navy and our allies, including two first of class vessels—USS SAN ANTONIO (LPD 17) and USNS LEWIS AND CLARK (T-AKE 1)—and the amphibious assault ship USS MAKIN ISLAND (LHD 8), widely lauded for its revolutionary application of hybrid technology and integration of environmental efficiencies and fuel conservation initiatives in the earliest stages of ship design. In the past year, he has worked tirelessly with General Dynamics NASSCO to contract for three affordable and flexible mobile landing platforms, saving the Navy nearly \$2.1 billion and preserving the shipbuilding capability of the Navy's only west coast shipyard. He has been an influential advisor to the LHA 8 analysis of alternatives which will result in a well deck ship configuration for the next Marine Corps large deck amphibious ship, and has worked to maximize competition in the Ship to Shore Connector Program, which will provide an unprecedented level of support to amphibious forces. He has been the central figure in some of the Navy's toughest negotiations involving nearly \$10 billion in Navy shipbuilding funding, to include the award of LPD 22-26 and the LHA 6 amphibious assault ship, the joint high speed vessel competition, and the Landing Craft Air Cushion Service Life Extension Program. At the heart of his efforts has been a relentless drive to improve the strength, capability, and flexibility of our operating forces at the best possible value to the American public.

Mr. Divens is also responsible for more than 100 foreign military sales cases, with more than 30 nations and a collective value of nearly \$2 billion. Of special note has been his direct effort with United States Forces—Iraq, helping Iraqi security forces develop the tools they need to defeat terrorism and sustain an environment where they can live free.

Mr. Divens' contributions to our Nation extend far beyond his material

achievements and programmatic accomplishments. He has served as an inspiration to all who have served with him, ensuring that all members of his team are keenly aware of their importance to the Navy and the true appreciation that he holds for their efforts. His unique ability to recognize talent and to foster respect and camaraderie throughout the workforce has had an enormous influence on junior Sailors and civilians and will continue to steer the course of our Navy well into the future.

Mr. Divens received his bachelor of science degree from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY in 1979 and his master of science degree from the University of Maryland in 1997. Throughout his distinguished Federal service career, he has been honored with numerous awards for his exceptional service, including the Navy Distinguished Civilian Service Medal, the Meritorious Presidential Rank Award and, most recently, the Rear Admiral Wayne E. Meyer Memorial Award.

Mr. Divens' tireless leadership and lifelong commitment to the Navy's shipbuilding capability have earned him the deep respect of his peers and shipmates throughout the Navy acquisition and fleet support communities. It is, therefore, a pleasure to recognize him for his many contributions in a life devoted to our nation's security. I know my colleagues join me in wishing him, his wife Joan, his daughters Alison, Laura and Molly, and his grandson Daniel much happiness and fair winds and following seas as they begin a new chapter in their lives together.●

RECOGNIZING BLACKSMITHS WINERY

● Ms. SNOWE. Madam President, my home State of Maine's long tradition of entrepreneurship includes a marked dedication to creative and quality craftsmanship. Small businesses in Maine strive to be both imaginative in design and superior in value. One such small business is Blacksmiths Winery of South Casco, one of Maine's largest wineries and the first in the State to be awarded both the silver and bronze medals in international wine competitions. Today I commend Blacksmiths Winery on their continued success and commitment to excellence.

In the late 1800s, William Watkins lived and worked as an apprentice and blacksmith in South Casco. He was known to be an exacting craftsman, insisting upon making his own nails to ensure quality, rather than using the machine made variety. After William stopped working the blacksmith's forge, his son Albert shouldered the responsibility of the family business.