

Softener Rental, a company Earl bought into and then later purchased outright from his partners, while Opal stayed busy making a wonderful home in the house the couple built on the "Old Williams' Farm," a house Earl is especially proud of. "This farm belonged to the Williams family during the Civil War," he boasts.

Earl and Opal were married for 7 years before they were blessed with four children, sons David, Joe, and Phillip, and daughter Amber. The couple is not shy about explaining that their children have been the highlight of their lives. "We enjoyed our boys," the couple says, "but we were ready for a girl when Amber came along."

These days Earl and Opal stay busy tending to their three grandchildren and one great-grandson several days a week, and Earl still drops by the office daily to "check on" his sons. The couple, who have been married for over 61 years, claim that their faith and dedication to their church, Lick Fork Community Missionary Baptist, has played a major role in the success of their lives and marriage over the years—the two have been members of the church for over 50 years. "It has been a good life," Opal says. "We got married 61 years ago to stay married. We never thought of divorce like young couples do today."

Mr. President, Earl and Opal Williams have shared an incredible journey together, and their faith in each other, their family, and their church has given them a wonderful story to share. Earl and Opal's life together serves as an inspiration to the people of Kentucky, and I wish them many years of further happiness. The Laurel County-area publication the Sentinel Echo recently published an article to share the Williams' story with the rest of our great Commonwealth. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Sentinel Echo, Winter 2011]
FINDING LOVE IN A FAR OFF PLACE
(By Sue Minton)

Earl and Opal were not high-school sweethearts. They did not know each other as teenagers. Both grew up in Laurel County, on opposite ends of the county and attended rival high schools.

Earl Williams grew up east of London and attended Bush High School. Opal Morgan grew up west of London and attended Hazel Green High School.

Less than 20 miles separated the two. They may have seen each other at box suppers, the movies or social gatherings, but did not take notice.

"In those days you could not get any work locally, you had to leave home and usually go a long ways to find work," Earl said.

For 24-year-old Earl this was Kinzua, Oregon.

And it was in this lumber company-built town, 2,500 miles from home, that Earl did take notice of Opal.

The couple met in Kinzua where Earl was working for the Kinzua Pine Mills Company. "Kinzua, Oregon, was built by and for the Kinzua Pine Mills Company," Earl said. "It

was a company town, everything was owned by the company, all the stores, even the houses we lived in."

Opal went to visit her father, who also worked for the company, and stayed on after meeting Earl, getting a job in a local factory.

"Our courtship was about normal," Opal said. "We dated for about a year and got married Dec. 22, 1949, in Goldendale, Washington."

"About all there was to do in this little town was go to the movies," she said. "They showed the same movie all week. So we went once a week."

Opal recalls the company having a community building called "The Pass Time."

"On Saturday nights they had dances and on Sunday mornings the building was cleared out for church," she said. "We didn't care much about dancing; it was just being together in each other's company."

The couple returned to Laurel County in December 1954 after leaving Kinzua and spending about two years in Indianapolis, Indiana.

After returning home Earl went to work with Water Softener Rental. "I bought into the company in 1957 and later purchased the company from my partners," he said.

While Earl was building a successful business, Opal was making a home for the couple in the house they built on part of the Old Williams' Farm.

"This farm belonged to the Williams family during the Civil War," Earl said proudly.

Although their marriage and life was good, the couple wished for a baby.

"We were married seven years before this happened," Opal said.

"We were beginning to think we were not going to have any children."

When asked "what was an important milestone or event in their lives?" they answered simultaneously, "the boys."

"That was probably the highlight of our marriage," Earl said, "when the boys, David, Joe and Phillip, were born."

"Everyone said we changed completely when David was born," Opal said. "I don't know how we changed or how much, but Earl's mother said we did."

With only two years between the births of Joe and Phillip, Opal referred to this almost like raising twins.

"It would have been nice to have had a girl," Opal said. "But little boys are nice too, and I enjoyed my boys."

"But, we were ready for a girl when Amber came along," Earl said.

"We have three grandchildren, Amber, James and Matthew, and a great-grandson, Will," Opal added.

Earl and Opal said their marriage had not been different from most couples who have been married for many years. They don't have a magic formula to explain the success of their marriage. They just took their wedding vows seriously.

"We never thought of divorce like young couples do today," Opal said. "We got married 61-years ago to stay married. You have your differences but you work through them."

"They should try to work their problems out," Earl added.

"Couples should not be so quick to get a divorce. If everything does not fall into place for them, they'd get divorced," she added. "But there are some situations when a divorce is the only way."

Opal feels it is important for young wives to develop their own lives and interests. "Married couples should be able to work together, but women need their independence."

Their faith and dedication to their church, Lick Fork Community Missionary Baptist, where they have been members for more

than 50 years, has contributed to and played a major role in the success of their lives and marriage.

Although both are in good health, Earl has slowed down some since retiring, but still goes into the office daily "to check on the boys."

"It is nice having him home," Opal said. "Before he was always working at the business or the farm."

Opal spends three days a week enjoying and caring for great-grandson Will, the latest boy in the Williams' family.

When Will's mother, Amber, was asked to comment on her grandparents she said, "Eric and I were like them (referring to her grandparents), we were married seven years before Will came along. I think it is amazing to have been married for so many years and raised three sons that have been very successful. They were taught good work ethics (which) they are passing on to their children."

"It has been a good life," Opal said.

"We have had a good married life. It does not seem like 61 years; it has went by fast," Earl added.

COMMEMORATING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, on December 7, 70 years ago, just before 8 in the morning local time, the first wave of 183 Japanese imperial aircraft descended upon the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor. A second wave of 170 aircraft followed to make sure that as much damage was done as possible. Within 2 hours, this unwarranted act of aggression left four U.S. Navy battleships, three cruisers, three destroyers, an anti aircraft training ship, one minelayer and 188 U.S. aircraft destroyed. The attack left devastation and havoc in its wake, taking the lives of 2,402 Americans and wounding 1,282. The Imperial Japanese Navy conducted this attack in order to limit U.S. military intervention capabilities in respect to Japanese imperial ambitions in the Pacific arena.

On that day that President Roosevelt so aptly said would "live in infamy," the Japanese Empire left something behind amongst the smoldering ruins of our Navy. They left behind a unified people in which they "awakened the beast." Out of the ashes of Pearl Harbor was reborn an even stronger American Navy, economy, and people.

For the younger generations of today, Pearl Harbor was a remote event in an era long gone. But to people like Army PFC. Merle Berdine, of Valparaiso, IN, who was sitting in the warm Hawaiian sunshine in front of his barracks at Fort Kamehameha that fateful Sunday morning, this act of aggression was an attack on the present. Pearl Harbor wasn't just part of his collective history that he shared with his nation, it became part of his personal history, shaping and defining him. At 7:54 a.m. Merle was a soldier going through his daily routine and finishing up his 1-year rotation at Pearl Harbor. At 7:55 a.m. he was a man under attack in a nation at war, digging a trench to withstand the bombardment and wondering whether he

was going to see his family again. By 11 a.m., he was dealing with a new reality, one in which he was saying goodbye to more than 2,000 of his brothers. Within 24 hours, he was a soldier for a nation at war with Japan, within 48 hours, that war had grown.

We as a nation oftentimes take the sacrifice Merle and his fellow servicemembers have made for granted. They sacrificed their time, their personal health, and far too often their lives to let us as a nation live free and prosper. Without their sacrifices we would be living in a very different world today and no amount of gratitude can ever be enough. But we must try, and we must, most importantly, remember.

I am proud to say that, at last count, 60 of these heroes who experienced the horror of Pearl Harbor call Indiana home. But, as with all World War II veterans, this proud generation is shrinking. Just last year, six Pearl Harbor veterans passed away in our State. According to the Pearl Harbor Survivors, only 25 of them are able to be active members of their community. The rapid decline and increasing immobility of this generation poses many dangers to the memory of Pearl Harbor.

Today, we remember their sacrifice, we discuss the events of the day, the lessons of history are reviewed, we collectively remember, and, if you know a veteran of Pearl Harbor, we should slow down and listen before the opportunity passes.

Since 2002, I have been leading the effort in Indiana to record oral history interviews with Pearl Harbor survivors and all veterans as part of the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. In addition to the stories of 104 Hoosier Pearl Harbor survivors already archived at the Library of Congress, I have submitted the histories of over 10,000 veterans for permanent inclusion in our national history. As a veteran of the U.S. Navy, I know the memories and life changing experiences gained from serving our country, and I am pleased to help ensure that Hoosier veterans are able to record their personal stories so that we can all learn about and appreciate their tremendous sacrifice.

One of the most important lessons of Pearl Harbor was that the adversaries of the United States are multiple and active. We learned that we must always be prepared. On September 11, 2001, we were painfully reminded of these lessons.

As we recognize these historical events, I call attention to the 97,800 military personnel who today are on the ground in Afghanistan, with a total of 129,200 deployed to the region aboard ships at sea, on bases, and at air stations in the region supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. We are down now to only about 12,500 military personnel deployed to Iraq, yet some 79,105 are still deployed to the region aboard ships at sea, on bases, and air stations in support of the redeployment of that

force. Since 2003, 4,474 have been killed in Iraq operations, and 1,733 have been killed in Afghanistan since 2001.

These men and women continue to answer the call to serve a cause greater than themselves, as those men did that fateful day in Pearl Harbor 70 years ago. I ask my colleagues to join me in humbly honoring Private First Class Berdine and all those who have and continue to serve our Nation in uniform for their inspirational service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE MISSION CONTINUES

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, on Veterans Day, November 11, 2011, I was fortunate enough to attend a service project at Walnut Grove Elementary School in St. Louis, MO, alongside nearly 100 veteran and civilian volunteers. These volunteers recognized that Veterans Day is not just an opportunity to thank veterans but also an opportunity to recognize them as the civic assets they are and to demonstrate that their skills and leadership are very much needed in our communities. This group spent nearly 7 hours working on a wide variety of academic and artistic projects that will improve the learning environment at Walnut Grove Elementary.

This experience was only possible through a Missouri organization called The Mission Continues, headquartered in St. Louis. Founded in 2007 after CEO Eric Greitens returned home from service in Iraq as a Navy SEAL, The Mission Continues is the only national nonprofit dedicated to empowering post-9/11 veterans to rebuild purpose through community service. They have recognized that many veterans struggle to find purpose at home without the structure, mission, and camaraderie of a military unit. The Mission Continues challenges our veterans to apply their military skill sets to address critical needs within our communities by serving as citizen leaders. This unique approach gives veterans renewed purpose and strengthens our communities for future generations.

The Mission Continues engages post-9/11 veterans to serve in their communities through 28-week service fellowships at nonprofit organizations. This fellowship program provides our former military men and women with the opportunity to translate their military experience into civilian skills. To date, The Mission Continues has awarded nearly 200 successful fellowships in 30 States and the District of Columbia. Additionally, the organization recognizes our veterans as civic assets and brings veterans and civilians together to serve their country by leading in their local communities.

We must remind ourselves that while our veterans are often told “thank you,” they also need to hear, “we still need you.” Through their work, The

Mission Continues is fundamentally changing the way our Nation welcomes home our servicemembers. In addition to the fellowship program, they are contributing to comprehensive academic research, have established innovative partnerships between public and private organizations that support our veterans in their transition, and provide an experienced voice as the Nation tackles veterans’ issues.

I encourage my colleagues in the Senate to recognize the work that The Mission Continues performs every day. As a nation, we are all invested in the post-military careers of the men and women in uniform who have defended our country. I encourage all Members to stand with The Mission Continues as they challenge our veterans to be citizen leaders in their communities.●

CELEBRATING THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF DR. HAL COHEN

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I rise to celebrate the distinguished career of Dr. Hal Cohen, an internationally renowned economist and professor, devoted husband, father, and grandfather, and my good friend.

Harold Allen Cohen was born in New York on April 21, 1938. After earning his B.A. from the college that is now known as SUNY-Binghamton and his M.A. from Cornell University, Hal began his career in health care financing and public policy by earning a Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1967. After completing his education, he was awarded a prestigious fellowship with the National Science Foundation from 1969 to 1971, which he followed with a year-long stint as an associate at the Danforth Foundation while teaching economics at the University of Georgia, first as an assistant and then as an associate professor.

Hal then took a position that would come to define his career. In 1972, he moved to Baltimore to become the executive director and founding member of the Health Services Cost Review Commission, or HSCRC, the State agency that regulates hospital rates in Maryland. As a member of the Maryland House of Delegates, I worked closely with Dr. Cohen during the formative years of the HSCRC, and while he is quick to say that he was surrounded by a tremendous group of colleagues, it was his leadership that cemented the HSCRC as a Maryland institution. His insight was and continues to be invaluable in containing hospital cost growth. Dr. Cohen worked to ensure that hospitals could provide efficient, high quality care to every Marylander as he focused on ensuring that hospital financing options were fair, accessible and equitable. Since 1976, the HSCRC has financed nearly \$1 billion in uncompensated care, improving access for underinsured and uninsured Marylanders, and supporting hospitals’ social mission while providing them greater financial stability.