

Program, PSSF. When opportunities have arisen he has worked to highlight ways to strengthen programs such as Head Start and childcare to make sure the country took every opportunity to address child neglect and to prevent it.

Others have recognized Mr. Birch's contributions, including the American Psychological Association, which honored him in 2003 with their Award for Distinguished Contribution to Child Advocacy. Later in 2006 Casey Family Programs honored Tom again by giving him their Leadership Award.

I want to join the many others in recognizing Tom Birch. These days we talk a great deal about lobbyists and special interests in Washington, DC, but there are certain groups of people here in Washington you don't hear about. They won't be featured on the evening news or the front page of the newspaper. These are the men and women who patiently and quietly walk these halls to tell the stories of vulnerable children. These people do it not to get rich or to promote the fortunes of the powerful; they work on behalf of our most vulnerable. Tom is one of these people, an unsung hero who has made a true difference for vulnerable children. It has been a job well done for Tom. I hope his retirement is successful and rewarding in every way he wishes it to be, and I thank him very much for all the contributions he has made to the lives of all the most vulnerable children all across this country.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I was mistakenly recorded as a "no" on vote No. 227 on December 12, 2011. I would like to state for the record I intended to vote for cloture in relation to the nomination of Mari Carmen Aponte to be Ambassador to the Republic of El Salvador.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT GRIFFIN III

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, in Texas, football and team loyalty is a key part of our identity. Today, I know that Baylor University students, alumni, and fans—known as the Baylor Nation—are bursting with pride over the first Bear to win the Heisman Trophy. Robert Griffin III was named the 2011 Heisman Trophy winner for his incredible accomplishments on the football field. Baylor finished this season ranked No. 15 nationally with a 9 to 3 record which included impressive victories over nationally ranked TCU, Oklahoma, and Texas. While Baylor and Big 12 fans have witnessed Griffin's football prowess, many more American sports fans will have the opportunity to watch him lead the Bears in the Valero Alamo Bowl on December 29, 2011.

But it is not only his football talent that makes Robert such a remarkable young man. RG3, as he is known to his friends and fans, is the consummate

student-athlete. An honor roll student at Baylor, he graduated with a degree in political science in only 3 years with a 3.67 GPA. While he was leading the Bears this year on the gridiron, he was studying for his master's degree in communications, and he has indicated that he would like to attend law school as well.

Robert's career at Baylor balances academics and athletics and should serve as a role model for other aspiring young athletes. The discipline to succeed was instilled in him at a very early age by his parents, Robert, Jr., and Jacqueline Griffin, both Army non-commissioned officers, who laid the groundwork for his strong work ethic. A graduate of Copperas Cove High School just outside Ft. Hood, Robert was a three-sport star athlete—he still owns Texas' High School State records for the 110-meter and 300-meter hurdles—and a top student.

Throughout his career at Baylor, Robert set 52 school records in passing, rushing, and total offense. He has thrown for an incredible 10,070 yards, and 77 touchdowns, while rushing for 2,220 yards and 32 touchdowns. During his impressive 2011 Heisman winning season, Robert passed for almost 4,000 yards and 36 touchdowns, while rushing for 655 yards and 7 touchdowns. He also earned the Davey O'Brien Award, presented annually to the best NCAA quarterback.

On Saturday, December 10, 2011, Robert Griffin III was recognized as the greatest college football player of the year. The Heisman Trophy is the most prestigious and coveted award in college sports, and no one is more deserving of this honor than Robert Griffin III.

Congratulations to Robert Griffin III on an incredible season; to his family, who provided the foundation for his abilities; to his teammates and the entire Baylor Nation. This is truly a storybook ending to a tremendous season.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on December 10, the most prestigious sports fraternity in the country welcomed its newest member, Baylor University's Robert Griffin III, as the 77th winner of the Heisman Memorial Trophy. Griffin is Baylor's first recipient of the Heisman Trophy and the first player from the school to be named a finalist for the award since quarterback Don Trull finished fourth in 1963. The son of two retired U.S. Army sergeants, Griffin led the 15th ranked Baylor Bears to a 9 to 3 record and their second straight bowl appearance. The Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year has energized the football program and helped to end Baylor's 16-year absence from bowl games.

Hailing from Copperas Cove, TX, Griffin put up spectacular numbers, completing 72 percent of his passes for 3,998 yards with 36 touchdown passes. He also led the Nation in passing efficiency with a rating of 192.3, which broke the single-season Football Bowl Series record. On top of his impressive

passing statistics, Griffin averaged 4.0 yards per carry for 644 yards and nine touchdowns on the ground. Although Griffin is only a junior, he holds 46 of Baylor's career offensive records including passing yards, passing touchdowns, and rushing touchdowns by a quarterback. While leading Baylor to one of its greatest seasons in history, he helped accomplish other important firsts for the program. After winning a combined 4 games in November during their first 15 seasons in the Big 12, Griffin guided the Bears to a perfect 4 to 0 record in the same month, with 3 of the wins against rivals Oklahoma, Texas, and Texas Tech. The late-season victory over Oklahoma marked the first time in school history that Baylor was able to defeat the mighty Sooners.

Robert Griffin's skills are not limited to the football field. In addition to being an All-American in the 400-meter hurdles, Griffin is also a model student. He completed his undergraduate work in 3 years with a 3.67 GPA, earning a bachelor's degree in political science, and is currently working on a master's degree in communications. Griffin also plans to earn a law degree. I applaud his commitment to excellence in both academics and athletics.

Today, I join with my colleagues, and Robert's friends and family, including his parents, Robert Jr. and Jacqueline Griffin, in celebrating this fine achievement. Robert Griffin joins a special class of Texas athletes who are also Heisman Trophy winners: TCU's Davey O'Brien, SMU's Doak Walker, Texas A&M's John David Crow, the University of Houston's Andre Ware, and the University of Texas's Earl Campbell and Ricky Williams.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO THE LONG FAMILY

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate the Long family for earning the distinction of 2011's Arkansas Farm Family of the Year.

This honor reflects Heath and Betsy Long's dedication to farming and the importance of agriculture as Arkansas's No. 1 industry. As owners of Long Planting Company, a rice, soybean, and wheat operation of more than 2,200 acres of land, the couple has taken advantage of technology and improved farming efficiency while expanding their farm.

Heath has devoted his life to farming, spending his childhood on the farm and earning a degree in agriculture from Arkansas State University. As a fourth-generation farmer, his commitment to the agriculture industry has helped his farm as well as other farms within the State, as he serves as the vice president of the Arkansas County Farm Bureau board of directors and a member of the Arkansas and USA rice councils.

The Arkansas Farm Bureau's program honors farm families across the

State for their outstanding work both on their farms and in their communities. This recognition is a reflection of the contribution to agriculture at the community and State level and its implications for improved farm practices and management. The Longs are well deserving of this honor.

I congratulate Heath and Betsy and their daughters, Shelby and Sydney, for their outstanding achievements in agriculture and ask my fellow colleagues to join me in honoring them for this accomplishment. I wish them continued success in their future endeavors and look forward to the contributions they will offer in the future to Arkansas agriculture.●

TRIBUTE TO MIKE RISKa

● Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the career of the executive director of the Delaware Nature Society, Michael E. Riska. Mike is retiring this year after serving as executive director for 28 wonderful years spent opening the minds and hearts of Delawareans young and old to the splendor of our natural world.

Mike Riska attended West Chester University and earned a bachelor of science with a double major in biology and physical education. He also earned his master's in education in Natural Science from the University of Delaware. He is a certified teacher in biology, general science, health, and physical education.

Truly devoted to educating students in the natural sciences, Mike began his career as a teacher at the Tatnall School in Greenville, DE. He taught science to students in the first through eighth grades and taught eight 5-week upper-school marine ecology courses based on Sanibel Island, FL.

Mike took his love of science and education to the Delaware Nature Society in 1969, where he started as a part-time instructor and youth programs director. He was part of the initiative to transform the H.B. DuPont Farm into a learning environment for students across Delaware. For my first job, as a seventh grader, I was hired by Mike to assist other Delaware youngsters in building the trails that would soon become Ashland Nature Center. Every year thousands of students, including my own children, attend summer camps and class field trips at the Ashland Nature Center, where they learn about nature, ecology, and conservation.

Mike Riska was appointed to executive director of the Delaware Nature Society in 1984, just the third person to serve in this capacity. With Mike at the helm, the Delaware Nature Society earned record donations for furthering its mission of fostering understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the natural world through education. The society also worked to preserve ecologically significant areas and advocate stewardship and conservation of natural resources.

Mike has been recognized with several awards, including the Nature Conservancy Lifetime Conservation Achievement Award in 1997, an Exceptional Leadership Award from the Association of Nature Center Administrators' Board of Directors in 1999, and the 1999 President's Award of Association of Nature Center Administrators for dedication and service to the nature center profession. The Association of Nature Center Administrators recognized him as the recipient of its 2002 Leadership Award.

Mike has worked closely with several other Delaware nature conservancy organizations and is admired and respected by his peers. Andrew Manus, director of conservation programs of the Delaware Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, said:

Let me add my voice of congratulations to others who have benefitted from the years of dedicated service that Mike Riska has brought to conservation in Delaware. The Delaware Nature Society has been well served by his leadership, as has the greater conservation community in Delaware. Mike's thoughtful advocacy for the natural world in Delaware will be his endearing legacy for us all to enjoy.

Roger L. Jones, State director of the Delaware Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, stated:

Mike Riska's legacy is very simple—he instilled a passion for nature and a boundless commitment for protecting our environment within thousands of people in Delaware.

Lorraine Fleming, 2005 Delaware Audubon Conservation Award recipient, said:

Natural science and environmental education is Mike Riska's first love. It has been the foundation for his visionary leadership of the Delaware Nature Society over 28 years as executive director and before that as assistant director. Recognition and cultivation of staff and volunteers is Mike's natural strength. While he is always quick to give credit to his staff members and the society's large cadre of volunteers, the overall direction and support for DNS' accomplishments has consistently come from Mike. Mike's legacy is an enduring preeminent Delaware environmental organization that is nationally renowned among nature centers.

Mr. President, today I honor Mike Riska's legacy and accomplishments at the Delaware Nature Society. It is an honor to call him my first boss, a fellow advocate, and my friend.●

KATHERINE BOMKAMP AND WVU

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Katherine Bomkamp, a promising sophomore at West Virginia University, WVU, who invented a new prosthesis that reduces phantom pain for amputees, including many returning veterans. Last month, she was in New York City being honored by Glamour magazine as one of its "21 Amazing Young Women of 2011," to celebrate the 21st anniversary of its Women of the Year awards.

At the age of 16, following frequent visits to Walter Reed Army Medical Center while her father was stationed at the Pentagon with the U.S. Air

Force, Katherine conceptualized the "pain free socket," a prosthetic device that combats the phantom limb pain experienced by 80 percent of amputees. After two-and-a-half years of research, Katherine is now at West Virginia University, where the WVU Entrepreneurship Center is helping her obtain a patent for the device and find funding to make it available for injured veterans and other patients. The WVU Entrepreneurship Center is playing an important role in helping Katherine commercialize the "pain free socket." It is a great example of how America's research universities are supporting innovative entrepreneurs, whose ideas are vital to economic growth today.

Ms. Bomkamp didn't just sit on the sidelines and feel sorrow for the afflicted men and women she encountered at Walter Reed. She listened to their stories and learned that many amputees experienced phantom pain, the feeling of pain in an absent limb.

By researching the topic, Katherine found that no medications have been approved for specifically treating phantom pain. Instead, many amputees are prescribed antipsychotics and barbiturates, treatments that can be expensive and highly addictive.

For a 10th-grade science project, Katherine decided to leap into action. She created the "Pain Free Socket," incorporating thermal biofeedback into prosthetics to eliminate phantom pain in amputees. Phantom pain is caused by the brain continuing to send signals and commands to the limb. Bomkamp's device would help force the brain to focus on the heat produced through thermal biofeedback, rather than sending signals to the nonexistent limb.

Katherine Bomkamp deserves our praise and educational enrichment. She was the first WVU student to be inducted into the National Museum of Education's National Gallery for America's Young Inventors. Now that she is one of the "21 Amazing Young Women of 2011," the sky is the limit for what she might achieve.

Success stories such as this one show us that academic and student innovation are alive and well at universities such as WVU, and promise a brighter future for all Americans. It is essential that as we in Congress review our budget priorities, even in the midst of today's financial pressures, we continue—or even expand—our support of higher education and students like Katherine Bomkamp.●

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD L. COTTA

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Richard L. Cotta on the occasion of his retirement from California Dairies, Inc., CDI.

Since 2007 Richard has held the title of president and CEO of California Dairies, Inc., CDI. He has spent his entire career in the dairy industry in virtually all aspects of the business.

Richard Cotta's career at CDI began in 1993, when he joined San Joaquin