

the Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force who made this happen. I am proud to be their Senator.

REMEMBERING WILLIAM RASPBERRY

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, my State of Mississippi and the American journalism community have suffered a great loss with the death of William Raspberry. As a widely respected writer, his articles were refreshing in their depth of understanding and even handed reporting of the perils and triumphs of politics and government.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an article from the Clarion-Ledger in Jackson, Mississippi, written by Sid Salter.

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

[From the Clarion-Ledger, July 18, 2012]

RASPBERRY'S AMAZING LEGACY REACHES BEYOND JOURNALISM

(By Sid Salter)

When I learned of the death of longtime Washington Post columnist William Raspberry, I was immediately reminded of a conversation I'd had with him in 2005 in his hometown of Okolona. Raspberry, who logged 40 years writing commentary for the Post and saw his work syndicated nationally in over 200 newspapers, died at age 76 at his Washington home of prostate cancer on July 17.

Raspberry won the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for commentary and was then only the second African-American writer afforded that honor.

I had met Raspberry several times over the years at conferences, but never spent much time with him until 2000 when he became the first African-American journalist inducted into the Mississippi Press Association's Hall of Fame. In 2005, after learning of the early childhood education/intervention effort he was personally funding in Okolona, I asked him to meet me there and to tell me about his vision for changing the game for disadvantaged children in a town with a poor track record in public education.

Prior to the interview, I asked him if it bothered him that in 2000 he had been the first black MPA Hall of Fame inductee and that coming some six years after winning the Pulitzer. He reflected on the question, then said: "No, not really. One thing one learns growing up in the segregated South is patience. I was pleasantly surprised when the honor came and I was glad that my mother lived to see it, but my career had taught me that change comes ever so slowly."

One area in which Raspberry lost his patience was early childhood education. Raspberry's solution was program he funded and founded called Baby Steps in Okolona. The Baby Steps Program has been a partnership between columnist William Raspberry, the Okolona Area Chamber of Commerce, the University of Mississippi and the Barksdale Reading Institute. Other key community partners include a number of Okolona and Tupelo churches and local volunteers. "The (Baby Steps) basic idea is that all parents, no matter how unsuccessful they might have been in school, want their children to succeed academically—even if many of them don't know how to make that happen," Raspberry wrote in his nationally syndicated Nov. 17, 2003, column in The Washington Post.

"We propose to teach them. The text for the effort is Dorothy Rich's "MegaSkills"—a set of 11 attitudes and competencies that she believes lead to success in school and in life . . . the idea is to train the parents themselves, as they children's most effective teachers, to pass these MegaSkills along to their children."

On that day in 2005 in Okolona, I joined Raspberry at the Hazel Ivy Child Care Center—Ground Zero for the Baby Steps program in Okolona—along with two of the city's other day care centers. Raspberry arrived at Ivy's center and was greeted not as one of the nation's premier journalists, but as a neighbor and friend called "Bill."

Raspberry cut his journalistic teeth covering the Watts Riots in Los Angeles in 1965 and wrote passionately about the violence that gripped Washington, D.C., for a time. But in many ways, Raspberry never forgot his Mississippi upbringing and the inspiration of his schoolteacher parents. He was an advocate of self-reliance and hard work.

In 2005, I asked Raspberry to define his legacy in journalism: "I'm at an age where legacy becomes important. I'd like to leave something behind other than yellowing newspaper columns, something that people can carry forward. At the end of the day, I'd like to be remembered as someone who always tried to make clear the things that were pulling us apart and tried to ameliorate it, to point out that we're not as far apart as folks would have us to believe."

Bill Raspberry's place in American journalism is assured, but Mississippians would be wise to claim our part of this good man's distinguished personal and professional legacy.

HONORING AMERICA'S VETERANS AND CARING FOR CAMP LEJEUNE FAMILIES ACT

Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. President, it has been 31 years since Camp Lejeune officials became aware that toxic compounds were found in the drinking water at the North Carolina base. It has taken 31 years for countless water tests, analyses, investigations, studies, and reports to be conducted so we can finally vote on H.R. 1627, a bill that will give thousands of Marine veterans and their families the health care they deserve after suffering from illnesses caused by this water contamination.

Almost 1 million people at Camp Lejeune were exposed to drinking water that was poisoned with cancer-causing industrial compounds, including trichloroethylene—a metal degreaser, tetrachloroethylene—a dry cleaning solvent, benzene and vinyl chloride. For almost 3 decades people who lived and worked at the base were drinking, cooking, and bathing in water with these toxic chemicals, which medical experts have linked to birth defects, childhood leukemia and a variety of other cancers.

There are over 181,000 people currently registered on the Camp Lejeune water contamination website registry, which is the critical information link for the Camp Lejeune veterans, civilians, and their families who may have been exposed to water contaminants. Next to North Carolina, Florida has the second highest number of reg-

istrants with over 15,000. Every single State has residents registered on the Camp Lejeune website, and every Member of the Senate has constituents who have been affected by this water contamination.

Some scientists have been calling this one of the worst public drinking-water contaminations in our Nation's history. Some of the most vocal supporters of the Camp Lejeune victims are from my State of Florida. I am happy to tell them that we are finally doing right by those harmed while serving our country. Thanks to the dedication of these folks, the full impact of the contamination is being exposed.

I have pressed the Navy for all the facts surrounding the incident, and have advocated for conducting the right studies so those affected and their families can get more information on the possible association between their exposures and current and future health effects. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has been assessing the effects of exposure to drinking water containing volatile organic compounds since 1993. This Agency is also conducting an investigation, at the request of Congress, to determine the health effects of exposure to this drinking water. And the Department of Veterans Affairs already employs mechanisms to prevent fraudulent claims.

We are finally fulfilling our duty to protect our Nation's veterans and families who have sacrificed so much. After 55 years, they will finally get the medical coverage they are owed.

Finally, I would like to applaud my colleagues in the Judiciary Committee Senators LEAHY and GRASSLEY, for shedding some light on this water contamination issue.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am pleased that Chairman LEAHY and I were able to help with the effort to look at the issue of water contamination at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. In particular, in June, we sent a letter to the Department of Defense, which has resulted in it producing more than 8,500 documents to the Judiciary Committee.

I know that Senator BURR and others have been leaders with the effort to look into the situation at Camp Lejeune.

Every member of the Senate should be aware of the situation at Camp Lejeune.

The drinking water contamination that took place over several decades at the base was one of the worst environmental disasters in American history.

Camp Lejeune was designated a Superfund site by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1988 after inspections confirmed contamination of the ground water due to the migration of hazardous chemicals from outside the base and inadequate procedures to contain and dispose of hazardous chemicals on the base.

Residents of every State, who previously lived or worked at the base, have been impacted by the contamination.

Indeed, more than 180,000 current and former members of the armed services and employees at the base have signed up for the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water Registry. By registering, individuals who lived or worked at the base before 1987 receive notifications about the contamination.

The Camp Lejeune registry includes residents from all 50 States. 1,121 Iowans are among them. It's estimated that more than 750,000 people may have been exposed to hazardous chemicals at the base.

The numbers don't fully reflect the impact of the disaster at the base. There are real people behind those numbers.

In March, as part of the Judiciary Committee's annual oversight hearing on the Freedom of Information Act, we heard the testimony of retired Marine Master Sergeant Jerry Ensminger. He was stationed at Camp Lejeune with his family and told us of the battle his daughter, Janey, fought with leukemia for two-and-a-half years, before she died at the age of nine. He also told us of the difficulties that he and others were having getting information from the Department of Defense.

The men and women of the armed services protect us every day. We should never take them or the sacrifices that they and their families make for granted.

We in Congress have an obligation to do everything that we can to support them in their mission.

That's why I'm a cosponsor of the Caring for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act, which was introduced by Senator BARR in 2011. That bill, a version of which passed by unanimous consent in the Senate yesterday, will help to provide medical treatment and care for servicemembers and their families, who lived at the camp and were injured by the chemical contamination.

Unfortunately, the Department of Defense has not been forthcoming with information about the contamination at Camp Lejeune.

That's troubling, especially coming from the administration that proclaims itself to be the "most transparent administration ever."

As we all recall, on his first full day in office, President Obama declared openness and transparency to be touchstones of his administration, and ordered agencies to make it easier for the public to get information about the government.

Specifically, he issued two memoranda written in grand language and purportedly designed to usher in a "new era of open government."

Based on my experience in trying to pry information out of the Executive Branch and based on investigations I've conducted, and inquiries by the media, I'm disappointed to report that President Obama's statements in

memos about transparency are not being put into practice.

There's a complete disconnect between the President's grand pronouncements about transparency and the actions of his political appointees.

The situation with the Camp Lejeune documents is just another example of that disconnect. The documents should have been produced long ago.

The recent letter that Chairman LEAHY and I sent from the Judiciary Committee had to be sent because the Defense Department refused to produce documents in response to a March letter signed by six senators and three members of the House of Representatives. Chairman LEAHY and I had also signed that March letter.

The March letter had to be sent because of complaints that Congressional offices had received about the Navy's refusal to disclose documents needed for scientific studies of the contamination at Camp Lejeune. It was also needed because of claims that the Navy is improperly citing exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act to withhold documents related to the contamination.

So, while I'm pleased that there was a bipartisan effort to obtain these documents, I'm disappointed by the stonewalling and by the hurdles that were put up by the administration.

Transparency and open government must be more than just pleasant sounding words found in memos. They are essential to the functioning of a democratic government.

Transparency is about basic good government and accountability—not party politics or ideology.

Throughout my career I have actively conducted oversight of the Executive Branch regardless of who controls the Congress or the White House.

I'll continue doing what I can to hold this administration's feet to the fire with Camp Lejeune and where ever else I find stonewalling and secrecy.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, twenty years ago, Brown University, located in my home State of Rhode Island, established the Leadership Alliance, a national academic consortium of leading research universities and minority serving institutions with the mission to develop underrepresented students into outstanding leaders and role models in academia, business, and the public sector. Brown University and its partner institutions have continued to address this pressing national need.

The National Research Council recently published a report titled "Research Universities and the Future of America" that included a call for ten "breakthrough actions." Two of these actions involve reforming graduate education and creating pathways into the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for

women and underrepresented minorities. That is what the Leadership Alliance has been striving to do since 1992.

Through an organized program of research, networking and mentorship at critical transitions along the entire academic training pathway, the Leadership Alliance prepares young scientists and scholars from underrepresented and underserved populations for graduate training and professional apprenticeships. Leadership Alliance faculty mentors provide high quality, cutting-edge research experiences in all academic disciplines at the Nation's most competitive graduate training institutions and share insights into the nature of academic careers.

In the 20 years since its establishment, the Leadership Alliance has established a strong track record of success. More than half of the students who participated in the Summer Research Early Identification program enrolled in a graduate level program. Leadership Alliance institutions graduated approximately 25 percent of all doctorates in the biomedical sciences degrees to underrepresented minority students between 2004 and 2008, making it a leading consortium grantor of PhD degrees in the biomedical sciences in the United States.

Since founding the Leadership Alliance in 1992, Brown has mentored 386 scholars, of whom 35 percent have attained a graduate level degree. Nearly half of the students who participated in its Summer Research Early Identification program completed a graduate level degree. A majority of the Leadership Alliance doctoral degree recipients are in the STEM disciplines.

The Leadership Alliance is a model for identifying, training, and mentoring underrepresented minorities who are poised to expand and diversify the base of the 21st century workforce. I am pleased today to recognize the importance of such efforts and acknowledge the continued dedication of institutional leaders, faculty members, and administrators across the United States who provide training and mentoring of underrepresented students along the academic pathway. As such, I congratulate and commend the Leadership Alliance, including Brown University, for 20 years of contributing to creating a diverse and competitive research and scholarly workforce.

Mr. CASEY: Mr. President, today I would like to acknowledge the great work of the Leadership Alliance during its 20th anniversary. The Leadership Alliance is a consortium of 32 leading colleges and universities that aims to train, mentor and inspire a diverse group of students from a wide range of backgrounds to enter competitive graduate programs and research careers. This admirable goal of expanding access to high-quality programs is supported by the consortium's shared resources and vision.

I would especially like to acknowledge the program at the University of Pennsylvania, which is one of the