

years has been exceptional. It is inspiring to know that entrepreneurs such as Mr. LaCasse continue to draw upon their passion, ingenuity, and energy to develop new businesses. I extend my congratulations to Jesse LaCasse for his tremendous effort and offer my best wishes for the continued growth and success for LaCasse Bat Company.●

SERVICES CENTER FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize the Services Center Federal Credit Union, SCFCU, a member-owned, not-for-profit financial cooperative located in Yankton, Springfield, and Parkston, SD.

Chartered on April 2, 1962, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the SCFCU. As a community charter, membership is open to all who live or work in Bon Homme or Yankton Counties. Building upon their mission of being responsive to their members' needs by providing competitive financial services, their membership has grown to nearly 6,500 Bon Homme and Yankton County residents.

As a credit union member myself, I understand firsthand the benefit of a credit union membership. Credit unions are a part of the community and they are well aware of the specific needs of their members. Their commitment to providing the best possible service is commendable, especially in the financial environment we are faced with today.

The SCFCU commemorated their 50th anniversary during their annual meeting held in Yankton, SD, on June 23, 2012. I would like to offer my congratulations to the leaders and membership of the SCFCU on this milestone anniversary and wish them continued prosperity in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO LARRY MIZEL

● Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Coloradan—Larry A. Mizel—on the occasion of his 70th birthday on September 14.

There are few Coloradans who embody the spirit of the Centennial State as well as my friend Larry, and it is a privilege today for me to be able to share my thoughts about him with my Senate colleagues.

Larry is many things to many people, but at root, I think of Larry as an independent thinker; a savvy businessman; a man who cares about the world, his community and his family; and a man whose philanthropic reach is as wide as the Rocky Mountains are tall.

I ask my colleagues to indulge me while I talk a bit about Larry and recount some of his most notable accomplishments. The list is long, but his work stands as a model for others.

Larry always has believed in the value of a good education, and his own educational history is impressive. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in

business administration from the University of Oklahoma in 1964, and 3 years later, Larry received his law degree from the esteemed University of Denver College of Law.

From there, Larry took off at warp speed.

In 1972, Larry founded the company that became M.D.C. Holdings, Inc., which is one of the Nation's top homebuilders. MDC is the parent corporation to Richmond American Homes and is a New York Stock Exchange-listed company.

Forty years after founding M.D.C., Larry still serves as chairman and chief executive officer of the company. That is an amazing run, with a lot more to come, I hope and predict.

Under Larry's visionary leadership, M.D.C. consistently has maintained one of the strongest financial positions in the industry.

But it is not just profits that distinguish M.D.C. M.D.C. also is known for its high-quality work. For example, M.D.C. has the distinction of being one of the few homebuilding-based companies to receive an investment-grade rating from all three rating agencies.

Larry has never been one to rest on his laurels. In addition to M.D.C., he has pursued other business ventures. Larry was a founder and, until 1996 chairman of the board of Asset Investors Corporation, a New York Stock Exchange-listed real estate investment trust, as well as of Commercial Assets Inc., a real estate investment trust that traded on the American Stock Exchange. In addition, Larry served as chairman of the board of directors of Omnibank, a multi-bank holding company, until its sale to KeyCorp in 1995.

Yet, Larry is known in Colorado for more than these business-world accomplishments, as impressive as they are. Larry stands as a shining example to Coloradans about how to enrich the communities in which we live and to give voice to those who sometimes cannot speak loudly enough for themselves.

Larry has been actively involved in numerous charitable, religious, and community causes, some that reach beyond our borders.

For example, there are few leaders in Colorado who care as deeply as Larry does about issues related to Israel and to Jews around the world. Larry is a member of the national board of directors of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee better known as AIPAC which works to ensure a strong United States-Israel relationship.

Larry also is one of the founders of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, an international human rights organization, based in Los Angeles, CA. He has served as the International Chairman of the board of trustees of the Wiesenthal Center since 2003. As most of us know, the Wiesenthal Center helps to accomplish goals that Larry holds dear—namely, promoting tolerance and combating racism and anti-Semitism around the world.

It bears noting that the educational arm of the Wiesenthal Center—the Museum of Tolerance—is a recipient of the 2004 Tolerance Award given at the United Nations. It is a world-class human rights laboratory and learning center dedicated to challenging visitors to confront important contemporary issues.

Closer to home, Larry also founded the Mizel Arts and Culture Center—known as the MACC—located in Denver at the Jewish Community Center. The MACC aims to illuminate the human experience through performing, visual, and literary arts for the Jewish community and the community at large.

Larry's interests and expertise in international affairs extend far. For example, he is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations, an independent organization dedicated to finding solutions to the challenging foreign policy choices facing the United States and other countries—choices made all the more challenging after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Thankfully, Larry has brought his business acumen into the public policy arena. For example, in 1986 Larry founded and served as the inaugural chairman of Colorado Concern, an organization committed to promoting sustainable business growth and advancing the economic well-being of Colorado. I am privileged to work closely with Colorado Concern, especially in these tough economic times, when we are all searching for innovative ways to get our Nation back on sounder economic footing.

Larry also is a founding member of the Denver Rustlers, a group that has given him the opportunity to work with other Colorado business leaders to support community youth. As with Colorado Concern, I have been fortunate to participate in events with the Denver Rustlers. From raising scholarship money, to supporting participants at the Junior Livestock Sale at the annual Colorado State Fair in Pueblo, to opening the Denver Rustlers Kids Cafe in 1994 to combat childhood hunger, Larry has been instrumental in the Denver Rustlers' positive effect on children's lives.

I also want to take a moment to underline another great love of Larry's—another pursuit that fills Coloradans with pride. Larry is the founder of the Mizel Museum in Denver. The Mizel Museum provides regular artistic and educational programs that promote community understanding and tolerance for residents of the Rocky Mountain region. It is a stunning facility that makes a big difference in our state.

As part of the Mizel Museum and its related Mizel Institute, in 2004 Larry founded another crown jewel: the Counterterrorism Education Learning Lab, better known as the CELL. The CELL is a nonprofit institution dedicated to the prevention of terrorism through education. Located in Denver, the

CELL's exhibit was developed in consultation with world-renowned thought leaders and award-winning artists.

As Larry points out, it is the only exhibit of its kind in the world and has evolved into a greater institute for terrorism prevention and preparedness training. Through its acclaimed exhibits, distinguished speakers series, and training programs, the CELL has impacted thousands of individuals and has helped to enhance our public safety. Many Members of this Chamber have visited the CELL and have witnessed firsthand the power of its dynamic programs and interactive exhibits.

In early 2012, I was proud to colead, with Larry and the CELL, a public event that examined our Nation's foreign policy challenges 10 years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It is a testament to Larry that the event was able to attract a broad range of top national security experts, Members of Congress, policymakers, the media, and members of the public.

Over the years, many acclaimed organizations have recognized Larry's work and his philanthropy. I want to name some of the honors that he has received.

In 1987, Larry received the National Humanitarian Award from National Jewish Health, a global leader in the research and treatment of respiratory, immune and related diseases.

In 1996, Larry was named honorary dean of the University of Denver's Burns School of Real Estate and Construction Management.

In 2001, he was one of the recipients of the distinguished Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which gives tribute to the immigrant experience and individual achievement.

In 2002, Larry was awarded the title Honorary Irishman by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a Catholic-Irish-American Fraternal Organization founded in 1836, for his work supporting the Heroes of 9/11.

In 2005, Larry received the Defenders of Freedom Award from the National Homeland Defense Foundation, an organization that is dedicated to securing freedom in the fields of homeland defense and security.

In 2010, he was awarded the Ben S. Wendelken Special Trustees' Award by Colorado's El Pomar Foundation, for embodying the spirit of service and giving through his life's work.

And in 2011, Larry received the Steve Ross Lifetime Achievement Award from the Milken Institute and was named a Colorado State Patrol Honorary Colonel.

I could go on and on, but I think these examples help illustrate the scope of Larry's work and his life passions and the way that he is valued in our community.

I would be remiss if I did not also recognize the people closest to Larry—his family. He cares deeply for them. Larry and his wife Carol have two grown children and five grandchildren.

Mr. President, I want to close with this observation. There are very few leaders who have brought our community together since September 11, 2001, like Larry has. Larry has rallied Coloradans together literally to remember the heroes and victims of 9/11 and to rise up against the evils of terrorism. It is what he does best: He assembles diverse groups of people, finds their commonality, and marshals them toward a noble purpose. Larry cares greatly about the security of the United States, as well as our allies worldwide. And he will stop at nothing to try to create a world where people do not live under the constant threat of attack, whether by persecutors, terrorists, or other enemies.

Today Colorado thanks a great American—Larry A. Mizel—for a lifetime of good work—and many more years to come. Happy 70th birthday, Larry.●

HONORING FRANK WILLETO

● Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, in the annals of our Nation's military history, the Navajo Code Talkers will always be remembered. They were a small group of marines, but their impact was far beyond their numbers. Their skills were crucial to American victory in the Pacific during World War II. They turned their Native language into an unbreakable code, and wielded that power as a great force in securing Allied victory.

Today, we mourn the loss of one of those heroic men. On June 23, Mr. Frank Chee Willetto died at his home in Pueblo Pintado, NM. Mr. Willetto was 87 years old. His life was a remarkable story of valor, of dedication, and of service.

Mr. Willetto was born and raised in Crownpoint, NM. In January 1944 he enlisted with the U.S. Marines, 6th Division. He trained for 8 weeks as a Navajo Code Talker. He served in the Pacific Theater in the Saipan and Okinawa campaigns.

Frank Willetto and his fellow Navajo Code Talkers joined a fight for freedom in a world that did not always accord freedom to them. They knew firsthand the ugly face of discrimination, of intolerance. U.S. law had recognized Native Americans as citizens for only 17 years when our country entered World War II.

And yet, many Native Americans bravely served during World War II, served at a higher percentage rate than the general population. And among them were Frank Willetto and the legendary Navajo Code Talkers.

Mr. Willetto was awarded the Congressional Silver Medal. Our Nation is forever in debt to him and his fellow Navajo Code Talkers. But that is only part of his story. When he came home from war, he devoted his life to his community. He worked for many years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and then with the Department of Education.

In 1974, he was elected as a Navajo tribal councilman. He was later elected

president of Pueblo Pintado Chapter. He also served as a judge on the Navajo Supreme Judicial Council and as vice president of the Navajo Nation.

Last November, Mr. Willetto testified before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. He shared his experiences in the military, and he reminded us all how important it is that our veterans receive the benefits they were promised. He was a tireless advocate for housing and health benefits for veterans. Frank Willetto lived a long and productive life, and to the end he was steadfast in his efforts to help others.

His was a life of service, of defending others in time of war, and serving others in times of peace. A life that is inspiring to all who knew him, and who mourn him now. We remember Frank Willetto, and we honor his legacy when we hold true to the ideals that he lived: honor, courage, commitment. I extend my sincere sympathies to Mr. Willetto's family, to his many friends, and to his community.●

RECOGNIZING RICK BARTOW

● Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today a part of the Pacific Northwest is coming to Washington, DC. Thanks to the immensely creative and dedicated work of artist Rick Bartow and his team, two wooden pole sculptures will be placed in the garden of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Atop one pole sits a bear and the other pole a raven, representing the healer and the rascal, respectively. The Bear pole is 27 feet tall, and the Raven pole, 23 feet tall. The poles—collectively titled "We Were Always Here"—will face the Washington Monument and overlook the National Mall.

The artist behind this project, Rick Bartow, is a Native American of Wiyot and Yurok heritage who was born in Newport, OR. His previous work has been shown throughout the world, including his Cedar Mill Pole, which was displayed at the White House in 1997. When you hear Mr. Bartow discuss his art, his process, and the world around him, you realize that you are listening to one of the country's foremost artistic minds.

That talent is clearly showcased in "We Were Always Here." The level of detail, history, and meaning in each pole is truly amazing. The poles are based on Native beliefs, but the message and meaning behind them are universal. For example, Mr. Bartow explains that the repeated horizontal patterns on each pole, "symbolize successive waves, generations following generations, an accumulation of wisdom and knowledge." This idea that we can learn from our ancestors and from history is critical to the progress of our Nation and is one that is beautifully captured through these sculpture poles.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Mr. Bartow and his team, folks visiting the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian or walking the National Mall will now be able to look