

Those who work with Gary describe his deep commitment to and compassion for the children he works with and his community.

In addition to his work transforming the Boys and Girls Club, Gary has served Manchester in many other ways. He was an integral member of the committee that brought the Verizon Wireless Arena to Manchester, an important addition to the city's cultural offerings. He's also been a longtime member of the Manchester Rotary Club.

I hope Gary enjoys retirement at his camp on Newfound Lake and spending time with his wife Dotti and his two daughters, Abby and Kara. I join the City of Manchester and residents across the Granite State in thanking Gary for his service and wishing him all the best for a long, happy and fulfilling retirement.●

#### TRIBUTE TO FRANK BIGGER

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I wish to honor Frank Bigger, who will retire as the Pocahontas Mayor after 4 years of public service to the citizens of Arkansas in this elected position.

Frank was inspired to run for city mayor at 67, the first political office he has held. Frank ran on the platform of economic prosperity and job creation. In that light, he fought hard alongside the Chamber of Commerce and the Intermodal Authority to bring a Poultry, Egg Company, PECO, processing facility to the county. This created more than 1,000 local jobs and led to improved infrastructure to accommodate the business.

Frank helped the community overcome the worst flooding residents remember. Highways, bridges and businesses were closed because of several feet of water from a levee breach of the Black River. Under Frank's leadership, Pocahontas recovered.

Before serving as mayor, Frank graduated from Arkansas State University and served on the Black River Technical College board of trustees. In 1996, he retired as president from what is now Pinnacle Frame and Accent, and has also worked as a part-time bank owner and has owned local cattle farms.

My staff and I have enjoyed working with Mayor Bigger on the projects important to Pocahontas. I am truly grateful for his years of honorable service and dedication to the community.●

#### REMEMBERING LEO MOSKOVITZ

● Mr. CASEY. Madam President, Jermyn and Northeastern Pennsylvania lost a long-treasured member of the community when Leo Moskovitz passed away on November 24 at the age of 109. Although he lived for well over a century, his death feels premature to his family and his community. His wife of 45 years, Ann, described him as one of a kind, a fantastic man in every sense of the word. His contributions to

the Commonwealth, both public and private, are many and will not be soon forgotten. As one of Northeastern Pennsylvania's true pioneers, he helped transform the region's economic and cultural outlook over the past century. Those who knew him likened him to a real-life history book, reciting stories from 80 or 90 years ago as if they had happened the day before. On any day of the week, he could catalogue the many evolutions the greater Scranton region went through with perfect detail.

As founder and president of the First National Bank of Jermyn, Leo presided over significant growth in the bank's assets, while always offering opportunity to the small business owners and people of Lackawanna County. He was a banker who bet on people and usually won for all concerned. Leo was ahead of his time in many ways, including promoting women in an era when such a practice was far from commonplace. From the vocational schools he helped establish, to the numerous art and cultural organizations he and his wife supported throughout the region, Leo Moskovitz's love and compassion for his community and its people endured for over a century, and will continue to shine for many years to come.●

#### FAR EXCEPTION THREE

● Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam President, the Mercer Engineering Research Center, or MERC, is the nonprofit, research and applied engineering arm of Mercer University, a private university founded in 1833 and located in a state-of-the-art research facility in Warner Robins, GA; just a short drive from Robins Air Force Base. For over 175 years, the University has served Georgia as a highly respected educational institution.

In 1984, the School of Engineering was established at the Macon, GA, campus with the charter class beginning studies in 1985. Two years later, MERC was established under the School of Engineering to provide locally available engineering and scientific services with critical specialized skills to the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, while simultaneously providing a workload support-base to the Mercer School of Engineering in its development of high-technology skills in the Middle Georgia area.

MERC has a highly qualified professional staff, complex tools and test equipment, and extensive technical capability in the fields of aircraft structural analysis and design, flight test instrumentation, reverse engineering and prototyping, laboratory structural testing, electronic warfare software algorithm development, web deployed applications with integrated database access, industrial engineering and logistics.

MERC also employs engineering interns providing an avenue for students to get real world, Air Force-related experience, and today they are the largest source of entry-level engineers for Robins Air Force Base while also pro-

viding superior support to all other military services, large and small business, and other research agencies.

MERC has been able to maintain a successful, strategic relationship with Robins Air Force Base because of its Ph.D-level knowledge of sponsors' requirements and problems; its developing capability; its broad corporate knowledge and quick response capability; independence and objectivity; freedom from conflicts of interest; and lower costs. Their demonstrated ability to provide efficient, cost effective solutions to pressing research and development problems established MERC as the preferred source of real solutions to real problems.

Over the last few years, however, the Air Force and the Robins Air Force Base Small Business Office have emphasized increasing the percentage of small business contract awards; an initiative not without merit for sure. However, their interpretation and application of the Federal Acquisition Regulations, or FAR, has resulted in MERC essentially being barred from providing contracted services the likes of which they have provided with unmatched efficiency and significant savings for the Air Force for almost 30 years.

Since nonprofit research organizations by definition cannot be small businesses, they are excluded by law from competing for small business set-asides. However, the FAR offers seven equal and independent statutory authorities the U.S. government can apply which authorize, under certain conditions, contracting without providing for full and open competition.

Senior Air Force leadership at Robins Air Force Base have long supported the use of those exceptions, specifically, the so-called "Exception Three" which allowed for contacting without providing for full and open competition "when it is necessary to award the contract to a particular source or sources in order to establish or maintain an essential engineering, research, or development capability to be provided by an educational or other nonprofit institution or a federally funded research and development center."

That application of the FAR allowed Robins AFB to maintain the essential engineering capabilities of MERC to augment their own because under FAR Exception Three, MERC received sole source contracts when their expertise, flexibility and lower costs demanded it.

In recent years, however, the Small Business Office at Robins Air Force Base has approved the use of only one of the FAR exceptions, that being when "only one responsible source and no other supplies or services will satisfy agency requirements."

This application of the FAR, or misapplication if you will, makes it virtually impossible for the Robins Air Force Base to award certain contracts to any entity other than small businesses. It translates to higher costs and greater inefficiencies. Robins Air

Force Base continues to seek MERC's unique expertise and essential engineering skills, but is forced to pass money through small and large businesses to MERC adding time and cost to the product/service delivery. By demanding more awards go to small businesses, the government also suffers a loss of intellectual property, IP, since MERC transfers ownership of all said property back to the U.S. Government, while small businesses can retain IP for future revenue.

You would be hard pressed to find any bigger supporter of small businesses in the Senate than myself. However, when it comes to ensuring our men and women fighting overseas for our freedom have what they need to get the job done, there are only three things I care about: cost, schedule, and performance. Our men and women in uniform deserve that.

In this era of defense spending austerity, the Air Force can ill afford the unintended consequences of precluding entities that supply vital complex engineering solutions, along with the added benefit of cross pollination of educational experience between government employees, both civilian and military, and the best in the academic engineering community, from receiving business simply to meet a set-aside quota.

This issue is about ensuring Robins Air Force Base maintains essential engineering capabilities to supplement their own and their ability to swiftly and inexpensively select the most capable organization to provide the best product or service at the best value to the government. The Small Business Office at Warner Robins, in their attempt to carry out the Air Forces' broader goal of increasing small businesses participation, is jeopardizing the very survival of institutions provided for and protected by the FAR.

By selectively applying the FAR exceptions, the Air Force is ignoring the intent of the acquisition regulations. It is certain to destroy these few vital educational links between academic institutions and government engineers that need that level of expertise. More importantly, by ignoring FAR Exception Three, the government is limiting its ability to pursue the best solutions at the best price. We can ill-afford such consequences in this period of economic austerity, simply in the name of fostering the growth of small businesses.

I was encouraged in September when the Air Force took a step in the right direction with their approval of a Justification and Approval, J&A, for the use of other than full and open competition for an engineering, research and development contract in support of technologies and methodologies applicable to aging aircraft and support equipment. The contract will maintain essential engineering, research, and development capabilities at Robins AFB through support provided by MERC.

I am hopeful this recent development is indicative of a new way of doing

business at Warner Robins. In case it is not, I urge my colleagues here in the Senate to remain vigilant in their oversight responsibilities, and I renew my call to the Secretary of the Air Force to ensure local commands apply the FAR as written so as to guarantee our men and women in uniform have exactly what they need, when they need it, and at a price that is in keeping with our responsibilities as stewards of the American tax dollar.●

#### REMEMBERING MARY ANN MOBLEY

● Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, my State has lost one of our finest citizens. Mary Ann Mobley, a friend to many and one of our best known Mississippians, passed away Tuesday. Mary Ann was the first young woman from Mississippi to be crowned Miss America, an accomplishment that was a source of great pride to my State. I got to know Mary Ann at the University of Mississippi, where she was really a superstar and a fine actress. Incidentally, we were cast in a University Players production of "Tiger at the Gates" at Ole Miss. She made Mississippians proud of her success as an entertainer in Hollywood and a person who kept our State close to her heart throughout her career.

I ask unanimous consent that a December 11, 2014, article from the Clarion-Ledger newspaper titled "Mary Ann Mobley 'never forgot her roots'" be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Clarion-Ledger, Dec. 11, 2014]

MARY ANN MOBLEY 'NEVER FORGOT HER ROOTS'

(By Billy Watkins)

They danced in the streets of Brandon the night one of their own, Mary Ann Mobley, was crowned the 1959 Miss America.

"That's not just a saying, that's a fact," said Waymon Tigrett, 70, who grew up with Mobley and has owned Brandon Discount Drugs the past 46 years. "They put a jukebox out by the statue in the middle of Main Street, ran an extension cord out to it and that thing blared music all night. People danced and carried on for hours. It was a true celebration.

"You have to remember, Brandon was only about 2,000 people back then. It was a small, isolated town. And all of a sudden, a girl we all know is on television and winning Miss America. That was a huge deal back then. And still is to us."

Mobley, Mississippi's first Miss America, died Tuesday after a long battle with breast cancer. She was 77.

Services will be 1 p.m. Monday at Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson. Visitation will be Sunday from 4-6 p.m. at Parkway Funeral Home in Ridgeland.

Mobley won the crown in September 1958, the same year she graduated from the University of Mississippi.

"She never forgot her roots, where she came from," said Tigrett, who lived four houses down from Mobley on what is known now as Mary Ann Drive. "Rankin County used to own Rankin General Hospital, and we had a big benefit every year, Affair of the

Heart, to raise money for it. Mary Ann would come back from Hollywood and emcee it.

"She remembered everybody. She treated us just the same. She never got too big for us. She was the same girl who used to ride palomino horses in the pasture behind her house."

Judy Trott, former dean of students at Ole Miss, said Mobley "was always generous with her time when it came to Ole Miss."

"She would come back and oversee the Miss University pageant—the one she won to send her to Miss America—and the Parade of Beauties, another pageant that we still hold," she said.

Trott wasn't surprised Mobley went on to become a popular film and TV actress.

"Mary Ann was groomed for it," she said. "She had great talent, a great voice. Her mother would often come to pageants up here with her, and she was outgoing and bubbly. I guess that's where Mary Ann got her personality."

"I remember after one of the pageants taking Mary Ann and her mother down to the Holka, a place you could get cake and coffee. We were in there for three hours that night. It wasn't just the students talking to Mary Ann, it was Mary Ann talking to the students. She was interested in them, wanted to know their plans, their goals. She was extremely warm and outgoing. It was easy to love her."

Hometown friends, saddened by her death, quietly reminisced Wednesday.

Mobley not only battled breast cancer in recent years but suffered carpal tunnel syndrome in both hands and arms. Emails became shorter as every letter of every word required effort.

Phone calls to check on the people of her hometown also became shorter, but no more infrequent. If the conversation ever turned toward her own problems, Mobley would laugh and find a way to quickly change the subject.

Some of the memories stirred laughter. Such as the time Mobley was to perform at Brandon High School but the family car wouldn't crank. Her mother saddled a horse for the 5-mile ride, and she and Mary Ann made it there in time.

And the night Brandon folks danced in the street, the celebration spread to the capital city. A few town residents decided it would be a good idea to take the volunteer fire department's truck and drive it up and down Jackson's Capitol Street with the siren blaring. Jackson police eventually tired of the racket and impounded the truck.

Mobley also became a filmmaker, producing documentaries in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, Kenya, Zimbabwe and the Sudan.

Mobley's husband of 45 years, TV personality Gary Collins, died in 2012. The couple had one daughter, Clancy Collins-White.

Collins-White phoned friends Tuesday in Brandon to tell them of Mobley's death.

Three other Mississippians have won the Miss America crown: Lynda Lee Mead of Natchez, 1960; Cheryl Prewitt of Ackerman, 1980; and Susan Akin of Meridian, 1986.●

#### RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL FINALS RODEO

● Mr. HELLER. Madam President, today I wish to recognize the annual National Finals Rodeo, which takes place at the Thomas & Mack Center on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The National Finals Rodeo has been held in Las Vegas for the past 30 years of the event's 55 year history. Often noted as the foremost