

Similarly, in 1997, general director Mark Weinstein sought, through financial management and long-range strategic planning, to ensure a sound future for the Pittsburgh Opera, increasing the company's assets and establishing a gold standard for financial management in the industry. This planning, as well as the establishment of the Artistic Excellence Project to raise funds for engaging elite singers and directors, has ensured that the Pittsburgh Opera will continue to serve as a cultural centerpiece of Pittsburgh and a respected leader in the greater opera community.

Again, I want to congratulate the Pittsburgh Opera on the impressive achievement of their 75th anniversary. I wish them the best and look forward to their continued enrichment of the arts community both in Pittsburgh and nationwide.

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, today I wish to recognize the Pittsburgh Opera, the seventh oldest opera company in the United States. The Pittsburgh Opera is currently engaged in its 75th season, and I would like to congratulate them on this momentous anniversary. The company started in 1939 when five ambitious women were determined to bring opera to their community. Within a year, these women had assembled musicians, singers, sets, costumes, and lighting, and produced the opera company's first performance, Offenbach's "The Tales of Hoffman" at Carnegie Music Hall. Before long, the Pittsburgh Opera Society, under the leadership of general director Dr. Richard Karp, had become a fully professional organization.

The Pittsburgh Opera is not only recognized as an asset to southwestern Pennsylvania, but it is known throughout the international opera community for the fine skill and artistry of its productions. It has welcomed numerous celebrity vocalists over the years, and the company's notoriety only continues to grow and attract more talent. I believe that the Pittsburgh Opera has been undeniably successful in fulfilling its stated mission "to culturally enrich Pittsburgh and the tri-state area, and to draw national and international attention to the region," and I think that the 31,000 Pittsburghers and visitors who attend the opera's productions annually would agree.

The Pittsburgh Opera is also dedicated to fostering the development of future opera talent. The company has established and nurtured a resident artist program that ranks among the top five in the country and has the distinction of being the only program in the United States that trains singers as well as stage directors. These artists present two fully staged productions of their own and also develop a variety of general music programs to perform at public schools, community centers, and libraries.

Six years ago, after nearly 70 years without its own center, the Pittsburgh Opera acquired and renovated the

original home of the George A. Westinghouse Air Brake Co. in Pittsburgh's historic Strip District and transformed it into a state-of-the-art home for the development and production of opera. This structure is the oldest LEED-certified building in Pittsburgh, and it is a fitting home for an opera company with such a rich history and a promising future.

Again, I want to recognize the Pittsburgh Opera on its 75th anniversary. I wish them nothing but success in the next 75 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

FREEMASONS CONFERENCE

• Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, today I wish to join grand master Gerald E. Piepiora and the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Maryland in welcoming the 2014 Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America, which will be convening in Baltimore from Sunday, February 15, to Tuesday, February 18. This annual meeting is the largest gathering of grand masters in the world and the first time they have come to Baltimore. This delegation of grand masters represents 2 million Freemasons from all 50 States; Washington, DC; Puerto Rico; the Provinces of Canada; and the United Mexican States. In addition, a delegation of grand masters representing Freemasons from around the world also will be attending the conference.

Throughout their history, Freemasons—the oldest and largest fraternity in the world—have dedicated their lives to cultivating good moral character both within themselves and in their communities. The Masonic fraternity is dedicated to caring for those less fortunate and to giving back to the community, contributing well over three quarters of a billion dollars annually to philanthropic causes in North America alone.

Maryland Masons have carried on this tradition since 1787 by serving their communities with local scholarship programs, student assistance, volunteerism, educational support, and other charitable activities. Maryland Masons make important contributions to the quality of life of Marylanders at every stage of life, including the Maryland Child Identification Program that provides free identification and protection against the problem of missing children; free childhood language disorder clinics; transportation to regional Shriners Hospitals for children with orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and palate; and retirement housing and continuing care for Masons and their families.

I urge my colleagues to join me in welcoming this distinguished group of international guests to Maryland and in wishing the masons of Maryland continued success in their pursuit of

fraternity, brotherly love, relief, and truth.●

REMEMBERING WALTER J. "JIMMIE" FEW

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we often note in our record the passing of government and business leaders of renown, and that is appropriate. But it is also fitting to pause to reflect on some of those millions of American citizens who reflect in their lives the highest and best ideals of their faith and of America.

Jimmie Few of Mobile, AL, was one such person. I first got to know him when, in 1991, we took part in a mission to Russia as part of a United Methodist Church delegation. This was shortly after the fall of communism. We spent over a week in the small city of Vyksa, 5 hours east of Moscow. We roomed together in the home of a Russian family. This was the first chance the people of Vyksa had to actually meet and get to know Americans. Frequently, one of the Russians would, with surprise, say, "You look just like us!"

Jimmie was a very large man and naturally took charge. When an agreement was concluded, Jimmie would seal it with a firm—very firm—handshake. He loved the Russians. Indeed, after this he made some 19 more trips, assisting with orphanages, schools, and Bible schools as well as advising Russians on economic matters. Jimmie was a very experienced small businessman. He bought an orphanage a needed van on one occasion and fixed a road to the orphanage in another.

This kind of humanitarian, religious mission is not unusual for Americans. Thousands of such trips are occurring now involving hundreds of thousands of Americans who make trips to meet with millions around the globe. They don't focus on the rich and powerful; they focus on those in need, the poor and the children. No nation in the history of the world has ever matched such selfless giving. It reflects well on the United States, surely creating greater understanding among peoples, and it is in harmony, certainly, with the spirit of Jesus, which has inspired so many.

While Jimmy's business success and health suffered in recent years, his good life of service to his Lord and to others exemplifies the best in humanity.●

REMEMBERING COLONEL WILLIAM EDWARD CALLENDER, SR.

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today, I would like to pay tribute to COL William Edward "Bill" Callender, Sr., U.S. Army, Retired. Bill was a friend, a national hero proven in combat, a man who loved his family, and a man who committed himself to service to others. To an exceptional degree, he loved his country and most especially, he loved and honored those who served her in uniform.

The scripture says, in describing faith as more than intellectual assent, but action, that when Abraham was called, he “went.” When Bill’s Nation called him, he went—even into great danger. And, to a most unusual degree, throughout the remainder of his life, he continued to hear that call and he went—in service to others in a host of ways and especially to veterans.

I believe Bill Callender was one of Alabama’s most valuable citizens. Vivian Cannon, of the Mobile Press Register, wrote at the time of his receipt of the Distinguished Flying Cross, given for his actions on that harrowing day in Vietnam when he flew his chopper into a very hot landing gone to insert and later that day to extract American soldiers who were under heavy fire—a very fine piece on these events. Her article quotes a letter he wrote to his wife shortly after the events that included this line: “By the grace of God, we came out OK.” Such courageous actions cannot be bought with money. They arise from the character of the hero, from love of country and from loyalty to comrades.

It is part of the American sense of duty. Former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates talks about it in his new book, “Duty.” When the President and we in Congress send our magnificent soldiers into harm’s way to achieve a military objective deemed important, there is also a duty owed them and their dependents of the highest order. It is a bond that must never be broken.

Perhaps Bill never forgot that experience in Vietnam and others like it that were up close and personal to him. There were those badly wounded he flew out for life saving care, those killed in action, and those young, anxious faces he looked into when he flew them into areas of great danger where lives would be lost and where, by the grace of God, Bill had been spared.

Thereafter, he began a lifetime of service to them and America. And serve he did—with joy and enthusiasm, wisdom and judgment, and responsibility.

By nature, he was supportive and affirming. He was just a “good guy” and “humble,” says Wallace Davis of Volunteers of America. I admired him greatly. He was a leader in the best sense of the word. He gave good advice and insight. I valued his judgment. He led by example.

When my senior military advisor, COL Pete Landrum, came to the Mobile area, we asked Bill to arrange meetings for veterans and sought his input on key issues. He was the go-to guy. In fact, few, if any, veterans activities in the area happened without his leadership and contribution.

Serving on the important Battleship Commission, his tireless advocacy for the new Veterans Cemetery, working with the Veterans Administration and Congress and others, and his vigorous support for the Honor Flight Program just reflect some of his work. He truly gave himself for many good causes.

Bill leaves behind his wonderful wife, Jacqueline Bachar Callender; his 3 daughters, Ginger (Jay) Hawkins, Cyndi Callender and Tammy (Jeff) Hadley; 12 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren, and many great friends who are feeling his loss but can take comfort in the knowledge that we have had the privilege of being in the presence of a remarkable man who lived a wonderful life, consistent with the great heritage of America.●

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13396 ON FEBRUARY 7, 2006, WITH RESPECT TO THE SITUATION IN OR IN RELATION TO CÔTE D’IVOIRE—PM 29

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency, unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13396 of February 7, 2006, with respect to the situation in or in relation to Côte d’Ivoire is to continue in effect beyond February 7, 2014.

The situation in or in relation to Côte d’Ivoire, which has been addressed by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1572 of November 15, 2004, and subsequent resolutions, has resulted in the massacre of large numbers of civilians, widespread human rights abuses, significant political violence and unrest, and fatal attacks against international peacekeeping forces.

Since the inauguration of President Alassane Ouattara in May 2011, the Government of Côte d’Ivoire has made progress in advancing democratic freedoms and economic development. While the Government of Côte d’Ivoire and its people continue to make progress towards peace and prosperity, the situation in or in relation to Côte d’Ivoire continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in Côte d’Ivoire.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 4, 2014.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:16 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 357. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to require courses of education provided by public institutions of higher education that are approved for purposes of the educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to charge veterans tuition and fees at the in-State tuition rate, to make other improvements in the laws relating to benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1791. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to codify authority under existing grant guidance authorizing use of Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program funding for enhancing medical preparedness, medical surge capacity, and mass prophylaxis capabilities.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 5:33 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 2642. An act to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 357. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to require courses of education provided by public institutions of higher education that are approved for purposes of the educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to charge veterans tuition and fees at the in-State tuition rate, to make other improvements in the laws relating to benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

H.R. 1791. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to codify authority under existing grant guidance authorizing use of Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program funding for enhancing medical preparedness, medical surge capacity, and mass prophylaxis capabilities; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1982. A bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time: