

Betty has lived a full and wonderful life—full of dedicated service to her faith, her family, and her country. She always saw the best in others, and she always had a hopeful attitude about the day that lay ahead. So I am grateful for having had the opportunity to know Betty for just a few years in our wonderful home State. I am so grateful for the career and the life of service that Betty Russell gave as a gift to all of us in Delaware and in this grateful Nation.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with Senator CARPER for up to 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING CHRISTOPHER LEACH AND JERRY FICKES

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that Senator CARPER and I come to the floor this evening to honor Chris Leach and Jerry Fickes, two brave Wilmington firefighters who lost their lives this past Saturday night. In any State or in any community, the loss of a firefighter or police officer is devastating, but in our small State of neighbors, a close-knit State with an even closer knit first responder community, a community that includes families and multiple generations, it is especially hard.

To those who knew Chris and Jerry, it must be little comfort now that we are here on the floor of the U.S. Senate to pay tribute to their lives, but in the next few minutes, we hope to capture just a fraction of the light they brought to their families and our community with their love and service.

Lieutenant Christopher Leach wasn't supposed to be working on Saturday night, but he filled in for another firefighter, likely thinking it would be a shift like any other shift. He was always willing to step forward and serve.

After getting the call that there was a fire in a Canby Park row house, Chris did what he had been training to do since 1993. Chris did what he told his friends, all the way back to Salesianum High School, he always wanted to do as long as they could remember—fight fires.

Chris grew up in the volunteer fire service. He joined the Tallyville Fire Company in 1993 at the age of 18, rising steadily through the ranks of the volunteer fire service to captain. The more time he spent at the firehouse, the more he loved it. Four years later, at age 22, Chris joined the Claymont Fire Company and served as a full-time firefighter and EMT there.

Chris was a lifelong learner, doing whatever he could to develop new skills to support his crewmates and help save lives.

Chris took classes all over our country, from Virginia to Texas, to Cali-

fornia, and his training paid off. In July 2002, at a house fire in Claymont, a firefighter from the ladder company fell through the first floor and into the basement. Chris and two others saved that firefighter's life, earning Chris a series of recognitions, including Fireman of the Year from New Castle County Volunteer Fire Service and the Claymont Fire Company.

Several months later, Chris joined the Wilmington Fire Department, where he was assigned to Engine 4B Platoon. He was only there for a couple of years before being transferred to the Special Operations Command of Engine 1B, where he was quickly recognized for his work, and then Rescue 1B. At the time of his passing, he was serving with Engine 6.

All this time, Chris never stopped learning and improving. He never stopped acting on his passion for firefighting. He researched and applied for and earned a \$200,000 grant for extra training and equipment. He wrote the standard operating procedures for the Special Operations Command. He trained as an instructor in NIMS, the National Incident Management System, and made sure that every Talleyville volunteer member became certified in the NIMS system. He served on the Newcastle County Task Force Rescue Team and earned a bachelor of science degree in fire service administration from Waldorf University.

Throughout a long and distinguished firefighting career, Chris was constantly achieving and growing, saving lives and building new skills. Described by so many I have spoken to as a "firefighter's firefighter," his commitment to his brothers and sisters at the firehouse was relentless. If he thought the department needed something done, he would go do it himself. If the fire company couldn't afford something, he would find a way to make it happen. That commitment went beyond just his professional leadership. I have heard from so many who said Chris was a good, loyal, and faithful friend. He was a softball teammate and also a practical joker, a lover of Billy Joel and Lynyrd Skynyrd, a so-called Mr. Fix-It, and king of nicknames. He was a big guy with a big heart and a deep voice who couldn't hide when he entered a room. Chris was someone who volunteered at the firehouse on his days off and visited elementary schools to talk about his love of firefighting and to help persuade a young generation to join him.

As his friend Andy Millis described him, Chris "was a lieutenant you wanted to work for." He loved his job, he loved his colleagues, and he loved his responsibility, but there was nothing he loved more than his family. His mother Fran, his sister Katie and Katie's wife Carolee, his fiancée Kate and her boys Landon and Casey. Most of all, Chris loved his beautiful children. He said there was nothing greater than being a father to his kids, Brendon, age 16; Abby, 14; and Megan,

12. He took them camping and fishing, to the beach and Cub Scouts, and always found a way to be there for their every activity. Chris lived for his kids.

Chris lost his own father Michael to cancer in 2004 and always kept his dad's funeral card in his helmet. Chris honored his father by being a great dad himself, just as Michael was to him. We can only hope that in the brief time each of us has here, that we shine brightly and relentlessly for the people we love and the community we serve. Few shine as brightly as Chris Leach did.

With that, I yield the floor to my colleague from Delaware Senator CARPER, who will share some words about another hero we also lost on Saturday, senior firefighter Jerry Fickes.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague CHRIS COONS for allowing me to join him and together offer this tribute to Chris Leach and Jerry Fickes.

Earlier today, the floor was busy with activity—and really joyful activity—as Democrats and Republicans tried to work together to come to an agreement on a spending plan to fund our government past the end of this fiscal year and into the beginning of the coming fiscal year. We worked out some difficult compromises. There was actually a lot of joy here as we said goodbye to one another and headed for our respective States until after the election.

So on the heels of what was really a rather joyous afternoon comes a far more serious one, and that is the opportunity to say goodbye and to say thank you to a couple of Delawareans who were really true public servants who tragically lost their lives this past weekend in trying to save the lives of others—Chris Leach and Jerry Fickes. I am going to talk about Jerry, since Senator COONS has shared with us some wonderful words about Lieutenant Chris Leach.

On Saturday, Jerry Fickes, a 13-year veteran of the Wilmington Fire Department, rushed into a burning home along with his colleague, Chris and others, when a member of the team believed to be Chris became trapped in the blaze.

They were told, I understand from those who were present at the fire, that when the Wilmington Fire Department showed up, they were led to believe that there were people inside the house; the house was on fire, and they needed to be saved. Once inside the building, I think they went into the basement, but the floor above them apparently gave way, and their lives were lost in that fire.

Two other firefighters were critically burned, and, hopefully, they are going to live, but one was burned on 70 percent of her body. Our hopes and prayers are with her and with her fellow colleague who also received very serious burn damage.

Jerry Fickes was a husband, a father, a U.S. Army veteran, and a beloved

member of Delaware's firefighter family. That is a strong family, as Senator COONS knows—a strong family and strong bond. We are very proud of them all.

He was born not in Delaware but in Evanston, IL, to his mom Jo Ann who sadly predeceased him, and to his father Jerry after whom Jerry Fickes, Jr., is named.

Jerry grew up in Illinois and later moved to Overland Park, KS, a suburb of Kansas City. Jerry's early life was full of innocent mischief and football games outside with his neighbors and his five brothers and sisters: Karen, Jeri, Kimberly, Steven, and David.

The neighborhood kids played together so much—constantly crossing through each other's yards, I am told, to get to different houses—that the neighbors were unsuccessful at keeping shrubs along their proper line. It reminds me of growing up in Danville, VA.

When Jerry started his freshman year at Washburn University in Topeka, KS, his grades were less than stellar, but in reality Jerry was just bored. Once he joined the Army ROTC, things turned around. The Army ROTC gave him structure, and he became very driven and goal oriented. By the time he reached his junior year in college, during which he would meet his future wife Laura while she was working the phone in their dorm's office, Jerry had it all together.

Jerry was a serious student, but he was also known to be a fun-loving guy. He graduated with a degree in computer science and mathematics but also had a lot of gym credits because he made being active a priority. His motto became "Mind, Body, Spirit: If you have all three, then you're sound."

College and the ROTC taught Jerry there is lot more to learning than just memorizing facts, and that is when everything started to click for Jerry. He took actuarial exams before graduating college and started his obligation to the Army with officer training in Fort Benning. He took a test and scored so well that the Army asked him what he would like to do. That doesn't happen every day. Jerry told them he wanted to join the infantry because he wanted to make a difference, and that is where we felt he could best do it.

I think that tells us a lot about the kind of man Jerry Fickes was.

His wife Laura recalls the first time she met Jerry—in a tiny office in his dorm building where she answered the phones. When people would call for him, everyone would say his name differently—Fix, Ficks—and Laura could never find his name in the directory until finally one day she met him in person. She asked him: How do you say your name? He just replied: You can say whatever you want to say, and walked away. Little did she or he know that someday she would take that name, just a few years later, as her own.

Once married, Jerry had the opportunity to become an actuary with

Alico in Wilmington, DE, a company with which Senator COONS and I are well familiar, and the newlyweds with their hard-to-pronounce last name came to the East Coast. Jerry worked at Alico for a while and then later became a consultant for Ernst and Young in Philadelphia.

But something always nagged at Jerry. Jerry had the heart of a servant, and when the first gulf war came around, he knew he could use his training in chemical warfare to be an asset to the Army. He called his reserve unit in Kansas to be put on the activation list, but at the time, and much to his wife's relief, he was not called up.

But Jerry wanted to do more, so it didn't surprise Laura one bit when Jerry decided to join the Aetna Hose Hook and Ladder Company in Newark, DE, as a volunteer firefighter. For over a decade, he selflessly juggled his firefighting duties with a full-time career in financial services and a new family that would eventually include two young sons, Ben and Josh. It also didn't surprise Laura when, after 12 years of volunteering, Jerry could no longer ignore his true calling. He gave up his job at financial services to work full-time with the Wilmington fire company.

From day one, Jerry jumped at the chance to take every call that came in on his shift. Because of this, his fellow firefighters called Jerry a dynamo. Sometimes his determination to get the job done right would leave Jerry covered in melted roof shingles or draped in insulation from an attic, while everyone else's gear was nearly clean. Those mischievous days running around the neighborhood in Kansas weren't far off. Around the firehouse, Jerry was known, very much like Chris Leach, as a prolific prankster. His friends recall that he would often pull a prank and then sit back, watching and waiting as everyone tried to figure out who was responsible for this latest joke.

Jerry lived a full life, but perhaps no job was more important to him than helping to raise two sons, Ben and Josh. He was also interested in hearing about his sons and even about their friends, their interests, their goals, and their projects. He was the first to help them research a science project, chaperone big gatherings, or teach Sunday school at Grace Lutheran Church in Hockessin.

Even though Jerry didn't care much for running, he knew how much his son Ben did. Jerry was so interested in his son's passion that Jerry did the first few triathlons with Ben, and this past May they both ran a marathon. Imagine that: son and father. And they were both getting excited to run the next race. In fact, just last week Jerry was thrilled to learn that his son had qualified for the Boston Marathon, a huge point of pride for him.

Ben, a Charter School of Wilmington graduate and now a freshman at Northeastern in Boston, and Josh, a junior at

Charter, both learned from their dad what is really important in life; that is, to serve others. To shake adults' hands and look them right in the eye, to give up your seat on the subway or the bus or the train for somebody else. That is the way Jerry lived his life, and that is what he passed down to his children.

Jerry was a true public servant. He devoted his entire adult life to others. He was also a man of deep faith. His service, and ultimately his sacrifice, reminds me—and I know Senator COONS—of a passage from the Book of John: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

While no words can ease the suffering of Jerry's family, we seek solace in the memory of a life lived for others and a life given to others by a brave and selfless man.

I pray and will continue to pray for Jerry's wife of 26 years, Laura; their two sons, Ben and Josh; Jerry's dad, Jerry, Sr.; his brothers, Steven and David; his sisters, Karen, Jeri, and Kimberly; and many, many nieces and nephews and his brothers and sisters in the Wilmington fire service.

Words can never express the pride we have in our hearts for our firefighters in Delaware, the City of Wilmington, and throughout our State. How grateful we are for their sacrifice and for that of their families because the work they do every day and the work Jerry did and really gave up his life for is unlike any other. From the moment he and his fellow firefighters put on that uniform every morning, they answered a call that they knew could put their lives at risk in just a moment.

I am reminded of the words of the firefighters' prayer that goes something like this: "When I am called to duty, God, wherever flames may race, give me the strength to save some life, whatever be its age . . . and if, according to our fate, I have to lose my life, please bless with Your protecting hand my children and my wife."

The prayer embodies the selflessness that Jerry Fickes displayed every single day. He took an oath to serve, knowing that one day he might not come home but feeling even more strongly that he had to help others. Now it is my hope that our community of Delaware can be a part of protecting him and looking after Jerry's family, his wife, and children, helping to comfort them in their time of need and looking out for them in the days to come.

To all of Delaware's firefighters who are in mourning, who continue to put on their gear every day to go to work to protect our communities, we salute you. We say thank you. And thank you for your unwavering commitment to lives lived in service to others. You are an inspiration to us all. So was Jerry.

God bless each and every one of you, and may God bless Jerry Fickes.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I thank Senator CARPER.

Before we conclude, let us share our deepest gratitude to Ardythe Hope and to Brad Speakman, two Wilmington firefighters who were also badly injured in Saturday's fire. They are still in the hospital, Chester Crozer, recovering, and we pray for a speedy recovery.

We are thankful as well for the safety of John Cawthray and Peter Cramer and Terrance Tate, firefighters who were also injured in the fire and for all of their colleagues.

For Delaware's first responder community, in some ways, tomorrow will be like any other. Our firefighters, our police officers, our EMTs and paramedics will be on call, keeping us safe and secure, and we, the rest of us in our community and State and country, will go on about our lives, many folks really not thinking about them until the moment we need them. But no matter what we are doing and what we are thinking, when their shift starts, they will be on it. They will be on duty ready to run without hesitation, even into situations that would cause the rest of us to run in the opposite direction.

As Christiana Fire Chief Rich Perillo said this past Sunday, "the only thing we ever signed up to do is to protect our neighbors and neighborhoods, and that we will continue to do no matter what comes our way."

We are both so grateful for the dedication, the service, and the love shown by the Delaware fire service to protect neighbors. In that sense, today and tomorrow and the days after will be like any other in that we can continue to rely on our first responders, and we are grateful for that. But in so many other ways—in the ways that truly matter—it just will not be the same.

For Chris's and Jerry's families and friends, for their brothers and sisters at the firehouse, for all the members of our first responder community, and for all the Delawareans who had a chance to work or serve with them and to be protected by them, things will not be the same. That is why we pray for their families. We pray that tomorrow will be just a little easier for them than today and that the next day a little easier than tomorrow, and so on, until the pain is eventually matched by the joy that comes from remembering someone you love and by the gratefulness we all feel for having had the privilege to know someone special.

One of life's unsung joys is the look in a child's face in the presence of one of their heroes. Have you ever seen a young child as a fire truck goes by? Their eyes are wide with amazement. The station door rises, sirens wale, the lights flash, and the bright red truck goes by with an American flag waving off the back. As adults, we notice it. We take notice. We wonder what might have happened, and we go back to our day. Even though a child doesn't know where the truck is going, they know that is what a hero looks like.

As a father, I look at firefighters like Chris and Jerry with the same sense of

awe that young children do, not just because of their uniforms or the sirens or the truck but because of their deep and lifelong commitment to do a dangerous job.

They loved their children and their families. They have been there for their friends and neighbors. They have served their communities and their brothers and sisters and firehouse tirelessly, all while risking their lives every day, leaving for a shift not knowing if they would come home that night or the next morning. That is what a hero looks like.

This week and the weeks to come, I know Senator CARPER and I and our whole community will remember, mourn, pray for, and be grateful for Chris and Jerry. Like a child watching an engine rush by, we will see their lives fly by in our memories and our tributes knowing they went by too quickly, leaving us before we can truly appreciate where they are going or why. But amidst so much we cannot know, we can take solace in knowing that they are going there for a reason far bigger than any one of us.

And as we watch their lives pass by in our memories, we can say to ourselves what the child says when he sees a fire truck go by: That is what a hero looks like.

Let me leave you with the same passage from Scripture shared by Senator CARPER from John 15. "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Thank you, Chris and Jerry, for your sacrifice, your service, your love, and for laying down your lives for all of us.

I thank Senator CARPER for joining me tonight.

Mr. CARPER. I thank Senator COONS for those beautiful, heartfelt words.

A few years ago, the Senator who would have joined me and who would have joined Bill Roth before me would have been JOE BIDEN, who served here for six terms. He was someone who loved the fire service in Delaware and is still beloved by them.

I have heard JOE say a number of times—and I know Senator COONS has as well—these words when talking to people who had a serious loss in their life. He would say something such as this: May soon come the day when the memory of the one you have loved and lost brings a smile to your face before it brings a tear to your eye.

That would be my prayer for these families, the Leach family and the Fickes family.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:31 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 29, 2016, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

JANE MARIE DOGGETT, OF MONTANA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2022. VICE CATHY M. DAVIDSON, TERM EXPIRED.

DIANE SUZETTE HARRIS, OF UTAH, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2022. VICE PAULA BARKER DUFFY, TERM EXPIRED.

VIRGINIA JOHNSON, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 3, 2020. VICE AARON PAUL DWORIN, TERM EXPIRED.

SYLVIA OROZCO, OF TEXAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 3, 2022. VICE PAUL W. HODES, TERM EXPIRED.

STATE JUSTICE INSTITUTE

WILFREDO MARTINEZ, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE STATE JUSTICE INSTITUTE FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2019. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

GLENN FINE, OF MARYLAND, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, VICE JON T. RYMER, RESIGNED.

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

BRENT FRANKLIN NELSEN, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2022. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JEFFREY DELAURENTIS, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. BRIAN E. HASTINGS

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

VICE ADM. DIXON R. SMITH

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate September 28, 2016:

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. KENNETH P. EKMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. JON T. THOMAS

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. ALFRED F. ABRAMSON III
COL. PETER B. ANDRYSIAK, JR.
COL. ROBERT W. BENNETT, JR.
COL. JONATHAN P. BRAGA
COL. JOHN W. BRENNAN, JR.
COL. DAVID E. BRIGHAM
COL. MIGUEL A. CORREA
COL. CLEMENT S. COWARD, JR.
COL. PATRICK J. DONAHUE
COL. CHRISTOPHER T. DONAHUE
COL. ROBERT L. EDMONSON II
COL. SCOTT L. EFFLANDT
COL. DAVID J. FRANCIS
COL. PAUL H. FREDENBURGH
COL. DAVID M. HAMILTON
COL. NEIL S. HERSEY
COL. LONNIE G. HIBBARD
COL. JOHNNIE L. JOHNSON, JR.