

during our effort to transfer the ownership of the Rochester from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USACE, to the local community. The dam, which is more than 175 years old and provides a vital water supply to nearly 50,000 Kentuckians, had fallen into disrepair and its uncertain status with the USACE threatened Butler County's economic future. With David's advocacy, I inserted a provision in a recent water infrastructure bill transferring control of the dam to the local community.

Last year, I also proudly supported the Rochester Dam Regional Water Commission's application for an economic development grant to renovate the dam and secure its future for the area. With a \$3 million investment, local leaders like David can continue to help this region grow and benefit Kentuckians for years to come.

Although I am sorry to see him go, I wish David a wonderful retirement. I am told he looks forward to spending more time with Virginia, his son, Greg, and two granddaughters. I would like to thank David for his leadership of Butler County and for his dedicated service to its citizens. I urge my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating David on this remarkable milestone.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES LEWIS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to congratulate my friend, Leslie County clerk James Lewis, on his upcoming retirement from public service. For more than three decades, James has worked for his neighbors in local government, earning respect throughout the county and the Commonwealth. As he prepares to leave the Leslie County Clerk's Office, I want to thank him for his tireless work and dedication to our State.

First elected in 1985, James has been a fixture of his community for more than a generation. Of the many responsibilities of a county clerk, perhaps the most important is the operation and safeguarding of Americans' access to the ballot box. Throughout his service as county clerk, James has overseen nearly 60 elections, including every office from jailer to the President of the United States. Although the technologies involved may have changed, his commitment to his office has never wavered. I have had the pleasure to work with James on a number of projects throughout the years. His passion for the people of Leslie County is apparent in everything he does, and they have been served well by his time in office.

James became a respected leader among all 120 county clerks throughout the Commonwealth. From 1994 to this year, he served as the chairman of the Kentucky County Clerk's Association Election Committee, administering election training for all other clerks for more than 20 years. Between 1999-2000, James served as the associa-

tion's president. One of the association's initiatives, which James helped found, is the Help A Veteran Everyday, H.A.V.E., Program. James spearheaded one of their projects, which involves repurposing license plates into bird houses. The finished products can then be purchased at the clerk's offices. Through these efforts, James is helping support Kentucky's men and women who served our Nation in uniform.

Whatever retirement may hold in store for James, I wish him all the best. Perhaps he will spend more time on his hobbies, like gardening or fishing. I have no doubt that he will be enjoying more time with his wife, Betty, daughters, Danika and Wendy, and grandchildren, Kelsey and R.J. As he begins his well-deserved retirement, I would like to congratulate James on a distinguished career. I urge my Senate colleagues to join me in thanking James for his remarkable public service to Leslie County and to the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

TRIBUTE TO TERRY MARTIN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it is my privilege to salute my friend, Hart County judge-executive Terry Martin, as he completes his career of public service. Since he took office in 2005, Terry has dedicated nearly every waking hour to his constituents. As he begins the next chapter of his life, I would like to remember his lasting record of success and to express my sincere gratitude.

After graduating from Western Kentucky University, Terry spent 27 years in education. He was a teacher, an administrator, and a coach helping to guide the next generation. In 2005, Terry was appointed by the Governor to serve as Hart County's judge-executive, the leading elected official in county government. For Terry, entering public service was like joining the family business. His father, Elroy, was a city judge, a local fire chief, and a county magistrate. His brother, Glenn, was also a magistrate and part of this noble family tradition. The drive to serve his neighbors just seems to run in Terry's veins.

In the county's top job, Terry had a lot of responsibilities. With a goal to provide essential services to the residents in a fiscally responsible way, Terry consistently went beyond the typical job description. I hear he would even drive a snow plow during winter storms. As a former county judge-executive myself, I know firsthand how difficult a job this can be. Whatever challenge he may have faced, Terry consistently excelled and earned the trust of his constituents and his colleagues.

During his time in office, I have enjoyed working with Terry on a number of projects to help Kentucky. We collaborated with the Green River Valley Water District to deliver drinking water to rural parts of the county. Terry also identified the alarming frequency of collisions along Interstate 65

in the county. Together, we prioritized resources to expand the highway, promoting safety for both families and commercial travelers.

As he begins his well-deserved retirement, I am confident Terry looks forward to spending more time with his loving family. With Carmen, his wife of 40 years, they are proud parents to Lynlea and grandparents to Lyndon and Gwyneth. I wish the entire Martin family the very best as they take this next step together. Along with all those who have benefited from Terry's service to Hart County and to our Commonwealth, I would like to say thank you. He's been a good friend and a strong leader for Kentucky. I urge my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating Judge Terry Martin for a job well-done and wishing him a fulfilling retirement.

TRIBUTE TO SARAH NICHOLSON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it is my pleasure today to pay tribute to Sarah Nicholson, a great Kentuckian who recently retired from a nearly four-decade career with the Kentucky Hospital Association, KHA. Serving as the vice president of government relations for the statewide professional trade association representing hospitals throughout the Commonwealth, Sarah earned a strong reputation for her legislative acumen and her tireless advocacy.

As the leader of the association's public affairs operations, Sarah has worked with members of the Kentucky General Assembly and the executive branch for the advancement of our State's hospitals. She was also tasked with supporting beneficial legislation at the Federal level. As my staff and I have worked with the KHA through the years, Sarah was an effective advocate for its priorities.

In addition to her diligent work for the KHA, Sarah is passionate about bettering educational opportunities around Kentucky. At her alma mater, Western Kentucky University, she served on its board of advisers, its college of health and human services advisory board, and its alumni board. Sarah was also a representative on the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education Inter-Alumni Council and the Centre College Parents Advisory Committee.

As Sarah begins the next chapter of her life, I am confident that she is looking forward to spending more quality time with her family, especially her husband, retired Jefferson County District Judge James C. Nicholson, and their three children. I hope she enjoys every well-deserved time with them. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating Sarah Nicholson on her retirement and thanking her for her work on behalf of Kentucky.

TRIBUTE TO SCOTT REYNOLDS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, later this month, one of Louisville's

finest broadcast journalists, Scott Reynolds, will be signing off the air at Wave 3 News for the last time. For more than 20 years, Scott has brought his passion for Louisville and commitment to professionalism to our local NBC affiliate. Along the way, he has won awards, built friendships, and earned the respect of his viewers. As he prepares to leave Wave 3, I would like to take a moment to honor his career of accomplishment in Kentucky.

Scott grew up on a dairy farm an hour outside of Minneapolis, MN. A fierce competitor, he loved playing baseball and watching the professionals on television. Later in his life, Scott would bring that same competitive nature to his work on the other side of the camera as a broadcaster. After graduating college, he moved to northern Idaho to work for a local radio station. Throughout his career, Scott has worked in several markets, including Cedar Rapids, IA, Las Vegas, NV, and eventually back near his home in Minneapolis.

It's from there that Wave 3 convinced Scott to accept a new adventure in Louisville in 1996. He was ready for the intense market, even describing a constant "news war" in local television. He is clearly thriving in the competition. Now the anchor of the 5, 6, and 11 pm newscasts, Scott was even recognized among his peers in 2016 winning an Emmy.

Although he has earned his seat behind the anchor's desk, that doesn't mean Scott necessary stays there. In fact, I have heard some of his favorite segments have come from the field, including his coverage of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Bush v. Gore* decision in 2000 and his trip to the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

I have enjoyed the many times have gotten to speak with Scott about my work in the U.S. Senate. Discussing a broad range of topics important to Kentuckians throughout the years, I am grateful for his balanced demeanor and commitment to integrity. Every time he interviewed me, it was clear I was talking to one of the best in the business.

Although broadcast journalism is a fast-paced, time-consuming job, Scott still finds time for his many hobbies, including charity work with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the American Red Cross. The rest of his time is devoted to his wife and five children: Haley, Connor, Tyler, and twins Matthew and Logan. I would like to extend my warmest wishes to Scott with gratitude for his work at Wave 3 News. I know his drive and talent will be missed. I would like to ask my Senate colleague to join me in congratulating Scott Reynolds on a job well done.

REMEMBERING JOHN ANDREW RICKETT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to remember the life of

John Andrew Rickett of Wayne County, KY, who passed away earlier this year at the age of 94. As a proud member of the "greatest generation," J.A. served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II before returning to service again to fight in the Korean war. J.A. was a leader in his community, providing guidance to all those around him, and he will be remembered by many.

Born and raised in Wofford, J.A. interrupted his high school studies and was drafted into the Army Air Corps. Arriving in England 1 month prior to D-Day, J.A. flew as a B17 waist gunner on several missions over Europe. His service played an important role in helping the Allies win the war.

After his service in the Second World War, J.A. met the love of his life, Frieda. He dedicated the next 64 years to the service and love of his wife and their children. J.A. earned his bachelor's degree in agriculture from the University of Kentucky, where he was also active in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, ROTC. Upon graduating, he received a commission into the Army as a lieutenant and was drafted once again and sent to Korea.

When he returned, J.A. began working for the UK Extension Service, initially as an agriculture agent but later as a 4H Agent in Monticello. His family remembers that it was with the 4H that he found great joy. Because of his many years of work with the 4H, J.A. is known for his care and respect for several generations of youth in Wayne County.

Elaine and I send our condolences to his children, Cassandra, Jerry, Rebecca, and John, and their friends. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in remembering the life of a great man, J.A. Rickett.

TRIBUTE TO TOMMY WILLETT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, after leading the Monroe County government for nearly a decade, my friend County judge-executive Tommy Willett will retire at the end of his term. I would like to take a moment to congratulate him on his accomplishments during his time in office and to thank him for his leadership.

In 2011, Tommy answered the call of public service, stepping away from his successful business career to run for office. The job isn't an easy one. Speaking as a former judge-executive myself, I know firsthand the broad range of responsibilities that fall into the job description. But whatever the challenge, Tommy always worked to better the lives of the men and women of Monroe County.

I would like to mention one particular project I had the privilege to work on with Tommy. More than a decade ago, the community began discussing plans to construct its own water treatment facility. At that time, the county was purchasing water from the city of Tompkinsville, eventually

reaching a high cost of nearly \$80,000 per month. When county officials brought the idea to my attention, I stepped in to help. In addition to funds raised by the community and at the State level, I directed Federal resources to the project to help complete it. Working together with Tommy for a number of years, I was delighted to see the facility become fully functional earlier this year, with the capacity to pump 2 million gallons of water per day.

The Monroe County Water District's treatment plant is just one example of Tommy's lasting impact on behalf of his constituents. With a constant drive to help Kentuckians however possible, he should be proud of his time in office. As he ends his public service, I extend my warm wishes for a restful retirement. Whatever the future may hold for Tommy, I hope he enjoys more time with his sons, Scott and James, and his four grandchildren. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating Judge-Executive Tommy Willett for his public service in Kentucky.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter from 44 former U.S. Senators be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

DECEMBER 10, 2018.

DEAR SENATE COLLEAGUES: As former members of the U.S. Senate, Democrats and Republicans, it is our shared view that we are entering a dangerous period, and we feel an obligation to speak up about serious challenges to the rule of law, the Constitution, our governing institutions and our national security.

We are on the eve of the conclusion of special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's investigation and the House's commencement of investigations of the president and his administration. The likely convergence of these two events will occur at a time when simmering regional conflicts and global power confrontations continue to threaten our security, economy and geopolitical stability.

It is a time, like other critical junctures in our history, when our nation must engage at every level with strategic precision and the hand of both the president and the Senate.

We are at an inflection point in which the foundational principles of our democracy and our national security interests are at stake, and the rule of law and the ability of our institutions to function freely and independently must be upheld.

During our service in the Senate, at times we were allies and at other times opponents, but never enemies. We all took an oath swearing allegiance to the Constitution. Whatever united or divided us, we did not veer from our unwavering and shared commitment to placing our country, democracy and national interest above all else.

At other critical moments in our history, when constitutional crises have threatened our foundations, it has been the Senate that has stood in defense of our democracy. Today is once again such a time.

Regardless of party affiliation, ideological leanings or geography, as former members of this great body, we urge current and future Senators to be steadfast and zealous guardians of our democracy by ensuring that partisanship or self-interest not replace national interest.