

As a young seminarian, John joined 35,000 others in rallying with Dr. Martin Luther King at Soldier Field in Chicago and then marched with him as he went to Chicago City Hall to post his demands on its doors. He remains, to this day, a life member of the NAACP. Making a difference has always been part of who John Ostenburg is as a person. He witnessed firsthand the violence at the 1968 Democratic Convention while working as a campaign manager for Eugene McCarthy's Presidential campaign.

Upon leaving the seminary, John became a reporter at the Springfield State Journal covering the African-American community. He would go on to be an editor for the Joliet Herald-News, a sports editor for the Tinley Park Crescent Newspapers, and a reporter for the Hammond Times. He even was part-owner and managing editor for the Lockport Free Press.

What brought him to Park Forest was education. He took a job as communications director for Prairie State College. John has been a classroom teacher at the grade school, high school, community college, and university levels. His expertise teaching and administrative work made him an ideal leader in the Chicago Teachers Union. He edited the Union's publications, chaired the communications department, and was legislative director and chief of staff from 2007 to 2010. He also helped move the organization out of debt into fiscal stability.

John's love of Park Forest and its residents always came through to everyone. It was the late Marge Friedman Scherr, a legend in the community, that talked him into running for the Park Forest village board. She saw greatness in him. He lost in 1983, but he didn't give up. He won a 2-year term in 1985, and after the board approved a staggered 3-year term, won again in 1985.

In 1992, John ran and won a seat in the Illinois Legislature for the 80th District. He lost reelection 2 years later, but it was a blessing in disguise. John returned to the Park Forest village board in 1997, and in 1999, he ran and won his first term as mayor. He would go on to win reelection in 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015, becoming the longest serving mayor in the history of Park Forest.

During his time as mayor, John helped Park Forest continue its tradition as a place of progress. His visionary approach made the town an All-American award finalist in 2000 and 2006. John continued Park Forest's tradition of diversity by encouraging unity and equality in Chicago Southland, earning a 2009 Award from Diversity, Inc. John's expertise in housing is respected nationally, and he has served on panels for the Brookings Institute on confronting poverty in America.

John implemented the Park Forest Sustainability Plan to help ensure residents maintain high-quality life for future generations through green

projects that bring the community together. Under John's leadership, Park Forest was the recipient of the Distinguished Budget Award and Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for more than 20 years.

John Ostenburg's focus on service to others and the greater good is a trademark of his lifetime. His role model Thomas Merton once said, "We do not exist for ourselves." John's career is a reflection of this. Son, father, grandfather, author, and mayor are all roles in which he excelled. The people of Park Forest, the people of Illinois, and I take pride in calling him a friend. We thank him for his public service. John will never cease being a servant to people.

TRIBUTE TO KATHERINE PATERSON

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. president, Katherine Paterson is a Vermont author with more than 30 titles to her name and a list of awards that other writers could only dream of. She has a keenly special knack for introducing young readers to difficult topics about life and death, as she did with her well-known novel, "Bridge to Terabithia." She has just added a prestigious and fitting recognition to that long list, having been named the American Academy of Arts and Letters' 2019 E.B. White Award winner. The award pays tribute to her lifetime of achievement in children's literature.

What is notable about this latest award is the modesty by which Katherine Paterson comes to it. In an interview with Vermont Public Radio, VPR, the author who has twice won both the National Book Award and the Newbery Medal said her latest award held special meaning.

"Any award that has the name 'E.B. White' attached to it brings with it a great thrill of joy, since he's one of my real heroes," she told her VPR audience. "He probably was one of the best writers in America, and yet he respected children so much that he wrote some of his best work for them. And that makes me incredibly happy."

Clearly, some of E.B. White's influence has rubbed off, as Katherine Paterson's own novels show great respect for her readers, young and old alike. Her writing has been hailed for the compassion she expresses, taking on life's challenges—and tragedies—in a forthright and honest exploration for young readers. Her achievement is all the more impressive given that Katherine Paterson's first language was Chinese, having been born to Christian missionaries who immersed her in the culture before being forced to leave China in the late 1930s. Her studies of both Chinese and Japanese cultures, as well as her religious interests, are evident in her collection of writings.

We are fortunate that Katherine and her late husband John chose to settle in Vermont more than three decades ago. On both local and national levels,

she has been most generous with her time, visiting schools and inspiring young people to read, while advocating for organizations that promote literacy. It is no wonder that Katherine Paterson has been named a Living Legend by the Library of Congress.

Marcelle and I are proud and honored to call Katherine Paterson a friend and, more so, a Vermonter.

Congratulations to you, Katherine, on this latest and most meaningful recognition. It is so very much deserved.

RECOGNIZING VERMONT'S BEAUTIES LTD.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it is not often that I say the words "Vermont" and "bow tie" in the same sentence, except, of course, when discussing the famed Beau Ties Ltd. of Vermont. Beau Ties, Vermont's sole bow tie manufacturer, got its start as a mom-and-pop operation more than 25 years ago and maintains that ethos. They are an amazing example of the many small businesses that are the heart and soul of Vermont.

Beau Ties was started in 1993 by bow tie aficionado Bill Kenerson and his wife Deborah Venman. They ran the company out of their home and sold their bow ties through the mail. Over the years, the company has grown to employ 30 Vermonters and now has its own manufacturing facility in Middlebury. They sell hundreds of different bow ties, and their selection is constantly changing to keep customers coming back.

Though they are no longer at the helm, Bill and Deborah's desire to keep the company in Vermont has been honored. In fact, the company has never left the facility that it moved into in 1999, and many of its employees have been with Beau Ties for over 20 years.

Among its clientele, Beau Ties Ltd. can count the late Orville Redenbacher and Bill Nye. The company has also cut cloth for the Obama White House and is the official tie maker of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Vermont Statehouse. I have also sported Beau Ties before: I wore one of their bow ties to the investiture of Judge Geoffrey Crawford, now chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Vermont.

I am proud to recognize the achievements and devoted following that Beau Ties Ltd. has accumulated over its nearly three decades in business. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a "Seven Days" article titled, "Middlebury's Beau Ties Collars the Market on Dapper Neckwear." It tells the story of Beau Ties Ltd., from its humble beginnings to now and of its importance to Vermont's economy and its many satisfied customers, myself included.

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

SEVEN DAYS

[March 6, 2019]

MIDDLEBURY'S BEAU TIES COLLARS THE MARKET ON DAPPER NECKWEAR

Anyone who wears a bow tie is making a statement. It can be "I'm conservative," "I'm in the wedding party," "I'll be your server this evening," or "I'm intelligent and dexterous enough to knot my own bow tie." Regardless of the message, bow ties get noticed, as do the people who sport them.

Not everyone can pull one off—or tie one on. Those who wear bow ties are a rarefied set. And for many bow tie enthusiasts around the country, their bow tie mecca is Beau Ties Ltd of Vermont: a modern, one-story manufacturing facility in a Middlebury industrial park. There, bow tie aficionados are occasionally seen getting their pictures taken in front of the giant polka-dotted bow tie out front.

Never heard of Beau Ties? That's unsurprising in Vermont, where few people routinely wear ties of any kind. According to Elizabeth Smith, copresident and CEO of Beau Ties, most of the company's clients live out of state and buy their products online or through their catalogs.

But this predominantly retail business, now in its 26th year, boasts an impressive clientele of famous bow tie-wearing blokes: the late popcorn entrepreneur Orville Redenbacher, science educator Bill Nye "The Science Guy" and retired "CBS News Sunday Morning" host Charles Osgood, who has his own signature line of bow ties with the company.

Beau Ties has also produced ties for the Obama White House, Tiffany & Co., PBS, and countless colleges, prep schools and fraternal organizations. It's also the official tie maker for the U.S. House of Representatives and the Vermont Statehouse. And its private-label clients include fine menswear retailers Ben Silver, Barneys New York and Brooks Brothers.

On a reporter's recent tour of the facility, Smith and fellow copresident Cy Day Tall rarely referred to their clientele as "customers." Instead, they were "our guys" or "our fellas." While the bow tie market isn't huge, or exclusively male, the people who purchase their bow ties, neckties and other fashion accessories—cummerbunds, cufflinks, suspenders, cravats, pocket squares—tend to return time and again. Often they'll phone the company and ask to speak to a specific employee who helped them in the past.

"In our mind, we're a family business," explained Smith, who splits management duties with Tall. Smith handles customer service and sales, while Tall is the chief marketing officer and "wordsmith" of the catalog, the mainstay of their retail business.

Beau Ties' familial feel extends to its staff, too. Of the 30 employees, several are mother-daughter or grandparent-grandchild pairs. Many, including Smith, have been with Beau Ties 20 years or more. All but three are women. The company also hires no seasonal help, Smith noted, so that everyone can earn a decent wage with benefits.

Notwithstanding its reputation for formal attire, Beau Ties is actually a casual and relaxed workplace, where several seamstresses were listening to music on headphones and joking among themselves while sewing. Zooey, a small black pug, and Margy, an energetic Welsh corgi, enthusiastically greeted a visiting reporter.

Beau Ties was founded in 1993 by Bill Kenerson and his wife, Deborah Venman. Kenerson, a native of New Haven, Conn., and a Marine Corps veteran who attended Yale University, moved to Vermont in 1978 to buy the Killington Country Resort. A year later

he took a job at Simmonds Precision Products in Vergennes, where he worked until 1990. In 1991, then-governor Richard Snelling tapped him to serve as commissioner of economic development.

Though Kenerson had a strong business background, he had no training in men's apparel, Smith said. But he was a dyed-in-the-wool bow tie aficionado who inherited many of his favorites from his father and grandfather. Discouraged by the dearth of quality ties he liked, he and Venman launched their own bow tie business in the spring of 1993.

Two months later, they hired Vivian LaFave, a New Haven seamstress, who set up their shop in her basement and began cutting and sewing ties from fabrics Kenerson and Venman purchased in New York City's garment district. LaFave is still with the company and considered the grand dame of the sewing floor.

Kenerson and Venman began by marketing just eight bow ties via a one-page circular, which they mailed to 5,000 people; it eventually evolved into a catalog. The company also advertised in periodicals that Kenerson assumed would appeal to fellow bow tie wearers, such as Smithsonian magazine and the New Yorker.

Smith remembers the surge of business that occurred the day after Kenerson ran an ad on page two of the Wall Street Journal in the late 1990s. "We couldn't answer the phone fast enough," she recalled.

For several years, Kenerson and Venman ran the business out of their home, said Smith. However, the company quickly outgrew that space.

"Deb had to get up and get dressed every morning because we had to go through their bedroom just to get to our offices," she noted. In November 1999, Beau Ties moved into its current building. Wanting to maintain the company's homey feel, Kenerson had it outfitted with a large kitchen, an outdoor deck, a grill and even a dog run.

Soon, the company was producing 36- to 48-page catalogs that featured nearly two dozen new ties per month, as well as some ancillary products. The company's website also lists another 500 to 600 bow ties, which come as pre-tied, clip-on or "freestyle," that is, DIY knots.

Basically, the styles fall into two categories, Smith said: the subdued patterns for "the conservative fellows" and the loud, bold and bright colors for the more flamboyant dressers. On the day of Seven Days' visit, seamstresses were sewing plenty of green Celtic themes (for St. Patrick's Day), hearts (for Valentine's Day), and purple, green and gold masks (for Mardi Gras). Mostly, the fabrics come from China, Italy and the UK, Smith said.

It's worth noting that the "Ltd" in the company name isn't an aesthetic flourish but reflects the time-sensitive availability of its products.

"Bill and Deb's concept was to be limited, so that people come back," Smith explained. "I have to have something [new] to entice them to buy from me every month."

Beau Ties continued to grow throughout the 2000s. By September 2012, however, Kenerson, who was facing significant health challenges, sold the company to its current owners: David Kramer, who lives in New York State, and David Mutter, in California. Though other buyers approached him, Smith said, Kenerson insisted on finding people who would keep the company in Vermont and run it the same way he and his wife had.

"This was Bill's baby," Smith added. "Every single person who worked here was completely valuable to him." As she noted, Kenerson opened every piece of mail that came in and usually answered customers himself. A mere two months after the sale,

the "Beau" of Beau Ties died at the age of 81.

Though one might assume that the typical Beau Ties customer is a stodgy, Barry Goldwater-era conservative, Smith said that members of the younger generation also want to fashion one on.

Representative of the new demographic is 21-year-old Andrew Brown of Bristol, who's been working at Beau Ties since he was 17. His grandmother, Barb, works there, too. The younger Brown, a dapper youth who sports a bow tie daily, is now the company's social media manager.

"The bow tie wearer is the musician. He's the architect. He's the fella who works in a museum," Smith said. "He's the attorney and the judge. He's the young guy who wants to wear something on 'bow tie Friday.' He's the preppy kid who wants something to wear to the yacht club."

Doctors and other health care professionals tend to prefer bow ties, too. Why? The short ties don't drape onto their patients and spread germs, Smith explained. Pediatricians like them because babies and toddlers can't grab them. In fact, Burlington pediatrician Joe Hagan belongs to a professional group of docs from around the country called the Pediatric Travel Club, which gets its neckwear from Beau Ties.

Tall, who names all the ties and writes the product descriptions, said that, when Beau Ties first started, there were maybe five other bow tie manufacturers in the United States. Today, there are more than 50. To remain competitive, she said, Beau Ties keeps its prices in the \$45 to \$49 range, though some higher-end ties cost as much as \$75.

Beau Ties is unique in another respect, Smith added: It accepts old neckties from customers who want them converted into bow ties. Such "one-off" special orders are yet another way to maintain customer loyalty.

"Some guys will send in a hundred of them," Smith added. "We make an awful lot of custom ties here."

Like other industries, Beau Ties enjoys great benefits and faces challenges from being in the Green Mountain State. Its location far from its customer base increases the cost of shipping. For years, the company printed its catalogs on the East Coast until, as Tall put it, distribution costs became "exquisitely painful."

At the same time, Tall noted, "Vermont always has a certain cachet, and we certainly play that up in every letter we write."

"The core of this place is the manufacturing," Smith added. "I don't mean to sound schmaltzy, but I'm the one who goes out into the world to sell this stuff, and I'm always so proud. I never have a product that I don't think is amazing. And how fortunate am I? I get to see it get made every day."

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Ms. HARRIS. Mr. President, I was absent for vote No. 77 on Executive Calendar No. 200, the nomination of David Bernhardt to be Secretary of the Interior. Had I been present, I would have voted no on the nomination.●

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to join in the celebration of National Library Week. This year's theme, "Libraries = Strong