

America to the Republic of Liberia, en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO MIRA BALL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, for six decades, my dear friend Mira Ball has been helping Kentucky families realize one of the cornerstones of the American dream: owning their own home. Earlier this year, Mira was honored for a lifetime of achievement in our Commonwealth with Leadership Kentucky's Flame of Excellence Award. Today, I would like to congratulate Mira for this latest recognition of her contributions to our home State.

With her late husband, Don, Mira built Ball Homes into a respected business helping improve the lives of Kentuckians for generations. Don led the sales, and Mira kept the books. Together, they made a premier team helping make home ownership a reality for families across the region. The organization was made better still as their children, Ray, Mike, and Lisa, took their own leadership roles. Today, the company builds over 1,000 high-quality homes each year.

Mira's contributions to Kentucky extend far beyond her entrepreneurial achievement. She is a trailblazing leader and philanthropist with special emphases on the health and education of our next generation. Saying she would only get involved in organizations where she could really make a difference, this former schoolteacher has helped steer the future of some of Kentucky's prominent institutions. In fact, Mira was the first woman to chair the boards of trustees for the University of Kentucky, Midway College, and the Lexington Chamber of Commerce.

In 2018, Mira made the single largest scholarship gift in UK's history of \$10 million to help Kentucky students access higher education and the opportunity for a better future. The scholarships focus on students from Nelson and Henderson Counties, Mira and Don's native homes, respectively. The gift is only one snapshot of years of philanthropy that will benefit the school and all who rely on it.

Across our Commonwealth, families and communities can see the results of Mira's work. Families living in homes built by the Ball have adapted this year, turning kitchen tables into of-

fices and classrooms. Students supported by Mira's philanthropy were given an extra leg up. Anyone who turns on Kentucky Educational Television, KET, or receives help from the United Way has benefited from her vision and immense generosity.

So, it is my privilege to join the chorus praising Mira's leadership in Kentucky. She has not only paved a remarkable path, but she is also helping new leaders find their own. On behalf of my Senate colleagues, I would like to congratulate Mira Ball for this award and wish her years of continued success in Kentucky.

The Kentucky Builders Journal recently published a profile on Mira Ball's career. I ask unanimous consent the article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Kentucky Builders Journal, Summer 2020]

MIRA BALL HONORED FOR HER LIFE'S WORK

Earlier this year, the statewide leadership development program Leadership Kentucky awarded its annual Flame of Excellence Award to Lexington businesswoman Mira Ball. The award is given to an outstanding Kentuckian who "bravely goes before and lights the way for others." Ball has certainly led a life that fits that description. As a member of the home building community, she is a role model to future generations in areas of leadership, business management and community involvement and service.

While the Ball name is well known in the Lexington area, Ball and her late husband, Don, have both had impact across the state. The couple incorporated Ball Homes in 1959 and immediately focused on the first-time home buyer market with their first model home in the Cardinal Valley neighborhood off Versailles Road. Their goal was to build homes in a price range that Lexington city police and firefighters could afford. At the time, police and firefighters were required to live within city limits.

More than 60 years later, the company remains family owned and still prides itself on making home ownership a reality for those who never thought it possible.

"If you've got a heart for people, you want them to be able to have an affordable home that they can live in and enjoy," said Mira Ball. "You see what's happening with zoning and the availability of land, and you get very concerned about the fact that the people who are the ordinary workers can't afford to live there."

Ball Homes has built more homes all over Lexington as well as in the Louisville and Knoxville markets. Don was passionate about affordable housing throughout his career, and the Balls' daughter Lisa Ball Sharp shares her father's interest and has served on Lexington's Affordable Housing Task Force.

Ball is still involved in the business although the Balls' three children, Ray, Mike and Lisa, have been leading the company since the 1980s. Ray took over acquisition and development, Mike oversees construction management, and Lisa is in charge of property management and sale. Ball said that even as her husband let go of the day-to-day decision-making long ago, she stayed active in the business long after because "nobody wanted to do what I did." What Ball did was make sure the bottom line always added up.

ACCOUNTING FOR SUCCESS

Ball first took an interest in accounting and business while attending the University

of Kentucky, where she met her future husband and worked in the Placement Service office. Although she graduated with a teaching certificate and taught junior high school students for one year, Ball left teaching to stay home when her children were born. As the family and the building business grew, she became the bookkeeper and behind-the-scenes partner while her husband became the business's public face.

"Don was a good salesperson," said Ball. "He had the ideas. And I was the one who kept things straight."

She said that while it's important to be ready for new opportunities and challenges, good timing had a lot to do with their success. Ball Homes has also benefited from new ideas as her children began to lead. They expanded into new markets, developed new neighborhoods and formed a property management business within the company.

"There's a lot of interaction between Ray, Mike and Lisa. But they work well together," said Ball. "The building business is something that you can be very proud of; you're furnishing homes for people."

When asked how she had managed to raise children who wanted to follow into the family business and shared their parents' commitment to the community, Ball mentioned the example set by her and Don's parents.

"Our parents were really good examples for my children. Hard work was expected and something you should enjoy and helping other people was important. Some of that empathy came naturally to Don," said Ball. "I think you have to be sincere and live your life like you should and be a good example, but I also thank the Lord every day for my parents and what they gave me. It wasn't wealth but they had good values and that's what was more important."

"I'm sure too that having us both work in the business and talking about things in front of [our children] made them familiar with what went on in the building business, both the ups and downs. There have been times when we thought we'd never sell another house with interest rates at 18% and 19%. They were aware of that growing up and understood it. Don always understood the impact of high interest rates on affordability, and Ray really gets that too."

FOCUSED ON EDUCATION

Her husband is remembered for his efforts to aid the homeless and addicted across the state through his roles as state representative and service on the Kentucky Housing Corporation. Ball's own civic contributions have focused on health and education. She has served with a wide variety of organizations including the PTA, the American Cancer Society, the United Way, Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, the St. Joseph Hospital Foundation, the Kentucky Historical Society, the Governor's Mansion Preservation Foundation, and the Kentucky Horse Park. In 1991, she became the first woman to serve as chairman of the Lexington Chamber of Commerce. She was also the first woman elected to the Kentucky Utilities board of directors, the first woman chairman of the Midway College board of trustees, and the first woman to serve as chair of the University of Kentucky board of trustees. She was appointed to the State Economic Development Task Force and the Governor's Commission on Tax Policy. She continues to serve on the Endowment Board of Kentucky Educational Television.

"I think I came along at a time when a lot of organizations thought it's time for a woman. I wasn't going to get involved with any organization if I wasn't going to actually work on it," said Ball. "There are so many things in this world that you feel like you can't make a difference. But education

is the No. 1 thing that will change Kentuckians for the better. It's where you can really do more to help."

One of the problems Ball has tried to address has been lowering the attrition rate of returning students who can't keep up with tuition costs. In 2018, she gave the University of Kentucky \$10 million to establish a scholarship fund that will focus on students from Nelson County, where she grew up and Henderson County, where Don was raised. It will fund dozens of undergraduate and graduate scholarships in the two counties and surrounding areas, focused specifically on addressing unmet financial need.

IMPACT ON HBA MEMBERSHIP

While her efforts have been highly publicized in the world of higher learning, Ball recognizes the benefits of work experience and involvement in organizations to promote lifelong learning.

"My work experience at UK was as valuable as any classroom experiences I had," said Ball. "I think experience is a big educator, and sometimes you have to make your own. I enjoy learning about new things all the time. That's the reason I like KET so much."

The Balls were active members of the home builders association and were jointly named Builders of the Year by the Lexington HBA in 1992. Attending meetings like the International Builders Show was a source of ongoing learning for her.

"I used to go to those meetings, and there wasn't a time that I didn't come back with something valuable. I went to all the financial seminars, and I can still remember some of the speakers and what they said," she laughed.

Ball points to her upbringing and her Christian faith for prompting her to serve her community through the years. She talked about a young minister who influenced her to see all people as deserving of love and respect. As she describes how she felt when she visited the Hope Center and other drug and alcohol addiction recovery programs, Ball's compassion for those who struggle in her community is evident.

"You never visit those places without thinking how blessed you are," she said. "If you just go in and really talk to people, you get the idea that you've just got to help."

GEORGETOWN LAW'S "LAWYERS AS LEADERS" COURSE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, there is no question that 2020 has been a year of challenges, difficulty, and concern. It is in these more challenging times that it is especially important to shine a light on those individuals and institutions that are doing good work, work that inspires the next generation of leaders to think bigger and create a brighter future. It is no surprise that Georgetown Law, where I earned my law degree, is doing precisely that, living up to its timeless motto: "Law is but the means, justice is the end."

This fall, Georgetown Law has offered a unique course entitled "Lawyers as Leaders" for the first time. Far from a staid black letter law class, this course is styled as a series of candid, introspective conversations between Georgetown Law Dean William M. Treanor and faculty members who have been prominent leaders in the law and public service. These conversations seek to confront law students with the

pressing issues of the day—the COVID-19 pandemic, racial injustices, the fragility of our democracy's norms, to name a few—and give them a sense for what, as future attorneys, they can do to address them.

In a time of unprecedented uncertainty, the course is a reminder, as one enrolled student put it, "that there is hope." Lawyers as Leaders centers students in the values that inspired them to study the law and reminds them of their own agency to make measurable change. It is no wonder that over 300 students have enrolled in this course, the largest class enrollment in Georgetown Law's 150-year history. I hope this course is offered for many semesters to come.

I have often highlighted the achievements of Georgetown Law both on and off the Senate floor. The education I received there was central to my decision to dedicate my career to public service. It is exactly courses like Lawyers as Leaders that will help encourage this and future classes of Georgetown Law students to pursue their passions as attorneys. Georgetown Law should be commended for offering this course and reminding students that the law is most exciting and transformative when it is viewed not just as a career, but as a calling.

I ask unanimous consent that an article from the Washington Post, published on November 6, 2020, titled "Most popular course ever at Georgetown Law? How to fight for justice," be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, Nov. 6, 2020]

MOST POPULAR COURSE EVER AT GEORGETOWN LAW? HOW TO FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

(By Susan Sruluga)

In her third year of law school, Maxine Walters expected to have everything in place: Her job locked in, her career path mapped out.

Then the pandemic hit, and economic uncertainty, and protests erupted over racial justice and tensions flared over the presidential election and transition. Her summer job with a firm evaporated, and with it the hoped-for offer of a permanent position by the time classes resumed for the fall.

But her school year began with an unusual class—one created to mark Georgetown University Law Center's 150th anniversary and shaped by the realities of 2020—that has, for many students, upended their ideas about rigid timelines for success, their expectations and even their aspirations.

Instead of a traditional course focused on an area of law such as contracts or torts, the school's leaders crafted a more personal, broad-ranging look at leadership. It was a recognition that the tumultuous times are forcing a reckoning, and leaving many students yearning to have an impact.

Clearly, they touched a nerve: More than 300 upper-level students signed up for "Lawyers as Leaders," the largest enrollment for a course in the history of Georgetown Law.

"This is definitely a time where the ground is moving," said Max Lesser, a 28-year-old student from New Jersey. "Everyone realizes that the old paradigms of politics and justice are kind of breaking. . . . Lawyers have a real role to play in what path we take."

For the online course, students submit questions about assigned readings and then listen to a conversation between Georgetown Law Dean William M. Treanor and a faculty member. He asks them to talk about how to move forward to confront "the great issues of this terrible time."

"This is a time when we're all grappling with so many crises" and profound challenges and losses, he said.

The conversations held each Sunday—now available to all on the school's anniversary website—have been topical, even urgent. Students have heard from Lawrence Gostin about health-care policy during the pandemic, such as vaccine distribution and whether the government should mandate mask-wearing and social distancing.

Neal Katyal, who has argued more than 40 cases before the Supreme Court, spoke about the contested 2000 election, in which he was co-counsel to Democratic candidate Al Gore, and about electoral integrity this year. Randy Barnett, a libertarian and self-described contrarian, talked about the constitutionality of health policy, recent Supreme Court nominees and the importance of seeking out opposing viewpoints. And Rosa Brooks talked about her work examining whether norms will hold fast in the aftermath of this contentious election, or whether the country could face a constitutional crisis.

The conversations have been challenging, insightful, sometimes funny and surprisingly vulnerable. Gostin spoke of his difficult childhood, and how that had helped shape the optimistic outlook he's known for. He shared his tips for the best way to make popcorn.

Katyal told students to do something that was uncomfortable for them, especially early in their careers. He said he had recently taken rap improv classes to improve his ability to think on his feet, and found it terrifying.

Katyal also shared how his father faced discrimination and was unfairly fired, but had his dignity restored by a civil case, inspiring Katyal to go to law school. He told how he always asked his children's advice the night before a Supreme Court case, and shared some of their tips on how to stay calm when facing the justices. (Once: "Think of a cute pig.")

This is a time when shared challenges make people more comfortable talking about vulnerabilities, Treanor said. "I don't think we would have these same conversations if we had this class two years ago."

Hillary Sale, an associate dean and professor who helped design the class, agreed. The stress of the times is making people introspective and reflective, she said, "in ways that are probably really good, and probably wouldn't happen without that outside pressure."

Paul Butler, a former federal prosecutor, challenged students to rethink the justice system, which he argues is not weakened by a few racist bad-apple police officers, but is "broke on purpose" and working the way it was designed to work.

Butler told of his searing experience decades ago when he was arrested while he was a prosecutor on a case accusing a U.S. senator of corruption. As he wrote in his book "Let's Get Free," Butler was charged with simple assault after a neighbor falsely accused him of pushing her after a dispute over a parking space. Police officers cursed at him. At the courthouse, he was led, handcuffed, through the inmates' entrance—when, as a prosecutor, he normally could breeze through the main entrance without needing to go through a metal detector.

At his trial, he said, he listened to a police officer lie on the stand. After he was acquitted, he felt the weight of how easily the false