

the Board of Veterans' Appeals in November of 2017. She is the first woman and military spouse to hold this position.

During her time as Chairman, Mason demonstrated strong leadership to the veterans and communities she served. From hiring 65 new veterans law judges to increase both hearing and decision capacity, to expanding use of remote work during the pandemic that resulted in record-setting hearings, she delivered on her commitments.

As the top Democrat on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee since 2017, it was a great honor to work with Chairman Mason and the Board of Veterans' Appeals to spearhead landmark laws such as the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act, which reduced the claims backlog from 472,000 cases to 96,000 cases in 4 years, and the VA Tele-Hearing Modernization Act, which VA was able to quickly implement as a result of Chairman Mason's efforts.

Cheryl has also been an outstanding champion for the hiring of veterans, military spouses, and caregivers at VA and in the executive branch. And as a PREVENTS ambassador, she has done great work in developing and distributing a holistic public health approach to suicide prevention, working locally and nationally to end suicide.

It is my honor to recognize Cheryl's 30 years of outstanding service and top-notch commitment to serving our military men and women, veterans, and their families. While Cheryl is beginning a new chapter, I have no doubt she will continue to serve as a leading national advocate.

Chairman Mason, on behalf of myself and a grateful nation, I extend my greatest appreciation to you for your enduring leadership, advocacy, and service to all veterans. Your impact will be felt by veterans nationwide for years to come. Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO VICTORIA LONG RUBIN

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Mrs. Victoria Long Rubin, a Knauss Sea Grant fellow on the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mrs. Ruben's scientific expertise has informed the committee's efforts in a meaningful and professional way. She has worked on several pieces of legislation that are important to improve the safety and economic security of the Nation, including the TORNADO Act, the Maritime Technical Advancement Act, and the first authorization of the Minority Business Development Agency. Her contributions will help improve tornado forecasting to keep Americans safer from deadly storms, promote maritime education at our Nation's community colleges, and increase support for rural minority businesses.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Mrs. Rubin for all of the fine work she has done and wish her luck in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO ASHLYN SPECTOR

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Ms. Ashlyn Spector, a Knauss Sea Grant fellow on the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. Spector's scientific expertise has informed the committee's efforts in a meaningful and professional way. She has worked on several pieces of legislation that are important to improve the safety and economic security of the Nation, including the TORNADO Act. Her contributions will help improve data management at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, promote Federal partnerships with our Nation's historically black colleges and universities and increase Federal coordination on floods and wildfires.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Ms. Spector for all of the fine work she has done and wish her luck in the years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE 1973 VASTER HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 1973 Vaster High School basketball team on the 50th anniversary of its overall state championship game performance and the way it continues to inspire many Arkansans to this day.

From the small, rural Jefferson County community of Moscow, and with a first-year head coach, the Vaster basketball team had a remarkable season, earning the Class B title and advancing to the finals in the overall tournament. Vaster defeated bigger and better teams to earn the right to play in the overall championship contest against the powerhouse players of Little Rock Central High School.

The Vaster squad was certainly the underdog, but they played hard and kept the game close through late in the fourth quarter. In the final moments, they came up short, but despite the crushing defeat, the Vaster players held their heads high and fans rallied around these young men who proudly represented their community. They revealed wisdom beyond their years in learning from the loss, taking pride in all they had achieved and still displaying true sportsmanship.

Stories like theirs bring communities together and create memories and friendships that last a lifetime. Their performance at the end of the 1973 season has forged a bond between the players, coaches, and spectators that still sparks passion today.

I applaud the coaches and players for their ability to show such grit and resilience on the court and grace in defeat. By overcoming challenges they faced along their hard-fought journey, the Vaster team demonstrated the power of uniting to achieve a common goal. Even 50 years later, this game represents something bigger than just

basketball in the lesson it provides—anyone can face long odds, and even suffer a defeat, but still be considered a winner.●

RECOGNIZING THE 1973 VASTER MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

• Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, in the past half century, Arkansans have played millions of basketball games, most of which have disappeared into a blur of fond memories and forgotten scores. For many of the residents of Jefferson County, however, one game still stands out from the rest: the 1973 State overall championship final between the Vaster High School Pirates and the Little Rock Central High School Tigers.

In that game, the Pirates represented a small rural community of only a few hundred, against the Tigers of Little Rock, a city of a quarter million. The Tigers were taller, better ranked, and were defending champs. Vaster, on the other hand, had overcome great odds just to get to the championship final, and few thought they had a chance. The Pirates could have made a half-hearted effort that March day and met expectations. But that is not what makes a great game and not what the Pirates had in mind.

When they took the court, Vaster's coaches and players were intent on shattering expectations, and that is exactly what they did. Far from being blown out, the Pirates went toe-to-toe with the Tigers. Central would take the lead, only for Vaster to wrest it away. The Pirates made the Tigers fight for every pass, point, and inch of progress. And you better believe they made Central sweat. This climactic battle between two great teams ended in a one-point Tiger victory, after Vaster missed a free throw in the last 12 seconds of the game.

Fifty years later, that game still fills many Arkansans with pride. It remains proof that extraordinary effort, commitment, and drive, even by teenagers on a basketball court, can inspire and make a difference years later. That is why I would like to honor the great coaches, players, and staff of the 1972-73 Vaster High School Pirates: head coach Herbert Pryor, assistant coach Andrew Carr, Cleveland Allen, Eric Biley, Samuel Biley, Jr., Reddic Borkins, Jimmy Dade, Carl Evans, James Evans, Tommy Evans, Roy Franklin, Jimmy Gladney, Homer Jackson, Melvin Jackson, Charles Petty, Rodney Ryce, Thomas Tarty, Ronnie Grice, Rodney Crawford, and Jacob Jones.

The State of Arkansas and the U.S. Senate salute you on this 50th anniversary of your great game.●

REMEMBERING JAMES "JIMMY" DEAL

• Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the life and legacy of my dear friend, James

"Jimmy" Deal. Jimmy devoted his life to protecting others and remained fiercely loyal to his friends and family to his last breath. While I am incredibly sad to lose my friend, I am so grateful to the Deal family for sharing him with the rest of us and allowing him to devote so much of his time and energy toward keeping others safe.

Jimmy was born and raised in San Francisco, CA. After graduating from San Jose State, Jimmy was determined to protect others from crime and violence, and so he took an assignment as a special agent at the Las Vegas office of the newly formed Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Though moving to Las Vegas was a significant milestone in Jimmy's career, the most important moment was a chance meeting with another Federal employee, Cathy Liance, who was also working in his building. Cathy and Jimmy were married after Jimmy started work at the Secret Service. Soon, the Deals filled their household with children Jennifer, Jessica, and David. Jimmy's career with the Secret Service would take the Deals all over the country, but they eventually made Reno, NV, their home.

Jimmy served with the Secret Service for nearly 30 years, including several years when he was assigned to President Gerald Ford's protective division after Ford faced multiple assassination attempts. After 9/11, Jimmy shifted his focus and became an early leader within another new Federal Agency, the Transportation Security Administration. Having spent nearly his entire adult life in Federal law enforcement, Jimmy saw how his experience and knowledge would be valuable for the new Agency. Jimmy took the role of Assistant Federal Security Director and provided a guiding hand in the Reno-Tahoe International Airport's safety and security protocols. At the airport, Jimmy was a leader in raising awareness about human trafficking, and he worked with agencies in Nevada to assist victims of human trafficking to escape. He continued this important work until his sudden passing.

My husband Paul and I will truly miss Jimmy and will remain grateful for his friendship and his lifelong commitment to serving people and protecting the public. To Jimmy's mother Urania and to Cathy, Jennifer, Jessica, David, and the grandkids Dylan and Casey, I hope you all keep Jimmy's boundless love and spirit with you always and take pride in what he accomplished.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. DANIEL EDELMAN

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I have the honor of recognizing a true Montana hero, Dr. Daniel Edelman. Dr. Edelman is a veteran of the U.S. Army who was seriously injured on a mission while deployed overseas as the non-commissioned officer in charge of security and intelligence of the 1st Military

Intelligence Battalion, First Infantry Division. Despite his severe injuries, Dr. Edelman pursued and obtained bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees, along with several professional certifications, allowing him to have a long and distinguished career serving his fellow Montanans.

While serving as chancellor at Montana State University-Billings, Dr. Edelman championed many student causes with a particular focus on veterans, disabilities, first generation, underserved, and Native American students. He worked with the FBI and other Agencies to provide educational opportunities for victims of human trafficking and also entered into an agreement for MSUB to partner with the University of North Texas Health Science Center to identify human remains, particularly those of murdered Native Americans. Additionally, he created a veteran's success center at MSUB. Dr. Edelman also helped raise the final funds for a science building and student scholarships. Outside of his work at MSUB, Dr. Edelman volunteers by serving on the board of Horses Spirits Healing, a nonprofit that helps veterans with PTSD.

After a career dedicated to serving Montana and our Nation, Dr. Edelman recently retired from MSUB due to a terminal condition connected to his time in the U.S. Army. Dr. Edelman truly embodies the values and spirit of a Montanan, and I have no doubt that his legacy of service will continue for generations to come. It is my honor to recognize Dr. Edelman for his service to our great State and Nation and for his dedication to improving the lives of his students and fellow Montana veterans. You have made Montana and our country proud.●

TRIBUTE TO DOUG BIBBY

● Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President. I rise today to honor the career of Doug Bibby, president of the National Multifamily Housing Council—NMHC—on the occasion of his retirement. For the past 30 years, Mr. Bibby has been a positive force in the housing sector, working to support families' pursuit of safe and affordable housing across this country.

More than two decades ago, Mr. Bibby became the president of the National Multifamily Housing Council, one of the Nation's leading associations representing the multifamily housing sector. Throughout his tenure, Mr. Bibby has led with empathy, clarity, and dedication. Early in his presidency, he outlined goals for the council and the apartment industry at-large, highlighting the benefits of this housing option for families. With that in mind, Mr. Bibby made housing affordability and safety a top priority through legislation, partnerships, and programming. His leadership was essential during the pandemic as he helped advocate for passage of bipartisan legislation that led to over \$50

billion in rental assistance going to households in need amidst the crisis.

At the helm of the council, Mr. Bibby formed their diversity, equity, and inclusion commitment strategy, recognizing its significance to the future of the multifamily industry. He took on the role of mentoring the next generation of leaders as a top priority. In addition, Mr. Bibby was committed to introducing a pipeline for new talent to enter the industry, which led to the formation of NMHC's Emerging Leaders Program.

Mr. Bibby left a productive, positive and enduring mark on the apartment industry, a sector that provides homes for almost 37 million Americans and contributes \$3.4 trillion to the economy annually. His legacy will be felt for generations to come. Having delayed his well-deserved retirement more than once, I commend him for his many years of dedication and wish him the best in this next chapter of his life. I congratulate him and wish him a well-earned, enjoyable and fulfilling retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO HUGH T. CLEMENTS, JR.

● Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Colonel Hugh T. Clements, Jr., on his retirement from the Providence Police Department and on his new role at the Department of Justice running the COPS program. A 38-year veteran of the police force, Colonel Clements joined the police force right out of college. He worked his way to the top job and did so with integrity and devotion to the job and the city he loves. Two things stand out about Hugh: One, he made the transition from leading the FOP to leading the department, a feat that provides a measure of his skills and fairness; two, in the department's dark days, he remained true to his oath, even though that likely ended any chance for him at promotion. When the skies ultimately brightened, his choice to stay true was rewarded; but at the time, it was not sure that day would ever come. It is easy to do the right thing when you are rewarded for it; when it comes with a price, that is the true test—one he passed. I have always admired and enjoyed working with Hugh. One of his many gifts is to always be in touch with and understand his officers and the challenges they face as they serve our capital city, with a similar understanding with the broader community. Leading any sizable department can be difficult, but Colonel Clements' long tenure in the role of chief under several mayoral administrations is a testament to his abilities—to the affection, loyalty and respect he has earned and to his thoughtful and effective community-centered approach.

Chief Clements has received many accolades for his outstanding service. He is a three-time recipient of the Chiefs Award. He has been recognized