

was known to make an appearance at Senator Ford's Kentucky Derby parties. It didn't matter where, when, or how you met Dale, he was sure to leave a lasting impression.

The mark of a good employee is a steadfast commitment to the work. The mark of a good friend is a steadfast presence for each other. To everyone he encountered over the last 50 years, Dale was both—and so much more.

On behalf of the entire Senate community, we thank Dale for his years of dedicated service, and we wish him and his family the best in retirement.

VETERANS DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, on this Veterans Day, I want to express my profound admiration for the unwavering service and sacrifices of our veterans. Their commitment to our Nation, its people, and the values we hold dear transcends generations. Democracy requires constant vigilance, and it is facing tough challenges at home and abroad. Despots and authoritarians worldwide would like nothing more than to see us retreat from defending freedom. But in the face of adversity, the United States stands resilient thanks to the courageous men and women who have worn the uniform.

From the American Revolution, where the Maryland Line fought bravely under General George Washington, to the defense of Fort McHenry in Baltimore that inspired the Star-Spangled Banner during the War of 1812, to today, where Maryland is home to almost 400,000 veterans, our State has a proud history of fighting for freedom.

Our veterans are among the best our country has produced. Each one answered the call to serve their country, leaving friends and family to go in harm's way. In today's divisive world, I especially want to thank our veterans for coming together from all walks of life to serve a purpose greater than themselves. Our veterans come from all over the country, from all backgrounds, races, and religions. Time and time again, veterans put their country before themselves and make sacrifices that most Americans do not even realize. They miss birthdays, anniversaries, births, funerals, and countless other life events so they can stand guard on the frontlines of our Nation's defense. Most servicemembers volunteer to join the military not long after graduating high school or college. Some serve a few years, and others make the military a career. All of them have earned the title of veteran.

In Maryland, prominent military installations stretch across the State from Aberdeen Proving Ground in the north to Patuxent River in the south. Marylanders have always answered the call when our liberties have been attacked. During World War II, Maryland produced over 5,000 B-26 Marauder aircrafts that bombed Nazi fortifications in advance of Allied landings on D-Day.

Baltimore's shipyards built 384 Liberty cargo ships during the war to transport troops and supplies to Europe. Marylanders have stood shoulder to shoulder, unphased in the face of monumental challenges.

Marylanders from across the State continue to volunteer to serve our country, both overseas and at home with our Active-Duty military components, Reserves, and National Guard units. Our veterans' dedication to country and democracy is felt around the world. Unfortunately, many of our veterans know all too well the cost of war. Our brave men and women continue to serve their communities even after their time in uniform is over.

Our veterans are humble patriots, and while I know they appreciate the public thanking them for their service, I want to encourage each Marylander to go a step further this Veterans Day: shop at a veteran-owned business, donate to a veteran's charity, hire a veteran for your company, or call a veteran and ask them to share stories about their time in the service. Our veterans are among the most highly trained, educated, and responsible citizens, and their skills make them incredibly valued members of their communities and their companies. On this Veterans Day—and every day of the year—put your thoughts into action and show our veterans how much we truly appreciate their service.

TRIBUTE TO BOBETTE FRANKLIN

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise to honor and pay tribute to one of the most patriotic and dedicated Kentuckians I have had the pleasure of knowing, Mrs. Bobette Franklin.

A Bowling Green, KY, native, Bobette is a graduate of Western Kentucky University. She married Steve Franklin, and they made their home in Bowling Green. They have been married for 24 years and have a son, Noah, who is their pride and joy.

Upon being elected to office in 2010, I set out to hire a director of constituent services for my State office in Bowling Green. I asked for recommendations for the very best and received one clear answer from many: Bobette Franklin. Bobette began her congressional career in constituent services with Congressman Ron Lewis and, upon his retirement, continued her career with Congressman BRETT GUTHRIE. I was thrilled when Bobette accepted my offer to lead my constituent services operation. My constituent services team is second to none and would not be known for their stellar reputation throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky without Bobette's leadership. Anyone who knows Bobette knows she takes tremendous pride in her work and strives to excel in all aspects of her life. Her commitment to excellence and attention to detail is evident in every interaction she has with Kentuckians who need assistance, no matter the size or scope of the request. During

Bobette's tenure in my office, she has overseen more than 20,000 constituent service cases, which has directly impacted thousands of Kentuckians and people across the Nation.

While Bobette has served Kentuckians in numerous ways, her outstanding reputation is most evident through her outreach and advocacy for veterans. Bobette has received numerous awards from the veteran community. In 2016, the Southern Kentucky Veterans Council presented her with its Distinguished Service Award for over 20 years of devoted service assisting veterans. And earlier this year, the Department of Defense Joint Executive Council of Veterans presented her with an award in recognition of her work for veterans and their families across Kentucky.

After 29 years of Federal service and nearly 13 years in my office alone, Bobette has decided to retire and close this chapter in her lifelong commitment to serving her community and her country. I will always be thankful to have had Bobette as a part of my team from the very beginning. Thank you, Bobette, for your service to Kentucky and to this country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JACK RUTLAND, JR.

• Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, it is an honor to pay tribute to Mr. Jack Rutland, Jr., of Lincoln County, MS, who for more than 10 years has shown an inspiring dedication to sharing the stories and memories of armed service veterans in Mississippi. By conducting radio interviews with veterans, their experiences can be appreciated by citizens all across Mississippi. Mr. Rutland has shown that his appreciation and respect for the men and women who have served in our armed forces goes beyond that of an average citizen, and America needs more people like Jack.

Jack Rutland, Jr., was born on May 20, 1948, in Birmingham, AL, while his father was stationed at an Air Force base there. His father, Jack Rutland, Sr., enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps prior to World War II, and he served during the war for 3 years in countries like England, North Africa, and Italy. During his World War II service, the senior Mr. Rutland earned five battle stars. Upon the completion of the war, he remained in the Air Force for over 20 years. Once he retired, the family returned to Lawrence County, MS. From experiencing his father's patriotic dedication to our Nation, Jack grew up with a sincere reverence for the veterans who served to defend the United States of America.

In 2003, the Military Memorial Museum in Brookhaven, MS, opened to inform the public of local veterans and the town's service history through artifacts, newspaper clippings, and other memorabilia. The museum is operated completely by volunteers, one of them

being Jack Rutland, Jr. On the 10-year anniversary of the Military Memorial Museum's opening, Jack interviewed four veterans. His interviews were captivating and respectfully executed, leading the public to want more. Today, Jack has conducted more than 50 interviews with veterans, some as recently as a few weeks ago. These interviews can be heartbreaking, like the story of World War II veteran Mr. Howard Britt who had to leave his beloved lieutenant in the field after he had been wounded. While in enemy territory, there was no time to wait. A story from Mr. Don Hemphill was similarly moving, detailing his arrival on the beaches of Normandy on the evening of D-day and seeing the wreckage of equipment left behind, as well as American soldiers who had not made it. The scene was so harrowing that Mr. Hemphill still could not talk about it when he was interviewed. In addition to these poignant interviews were inspirational recollections, like Mr. Hoyte Case who saw the iconic flag raised on Iwo Jima atop Mount Suribachi from his ship as he left the battle. Mr. Herbert Savell recounted his long journey home from the Pacific following the end of the war, traveling by cattle car to return to his small hometown in the Mississippi Delta. Walking down the aisle of the church and sitting in the pew beside his mother was how he returned. Each interview shows another side of the tragedies and triumphs faced by veterans.

The work that Jack has done is necessary to help younger generations understand the commitments and sacrifices made by our Nation's veterans. Preserving the oral histories of those who served helps us better understand the challenging circumstances they underwent and the emotional impacts they experienced during that time. These veterans had immense influence on our country from their brave and selfless duty of protecting our Nation's values and freedoms. Through the diligent work of Jack Rutland, Jr., we can learn a bit more about the Nation we are today from those who served in the armed forces for us.

My life has truly been enhanced by knowing Jack and his wife Shirley, who reside in my corner of the world. They have an outstanding family that includes their daughter Jamie, son-in-law Joshua Grosshans, and three grandchildren: Avery Rose, Jack Seton, and Alice Faye.

In conclusion, I am incredibly grateful to Mr. Jack Rutland, Jr., for dedicating his time to serving those who have served our country. I commend him for his accomplishments, and I hope his story and the veterans' stories he brings to light will inspire future generations.●

REMEMBERING VIC FISCHER

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to an extraordinary Alaskan, Victor Fischer, who passed

away on October 22, 2023, after an incredible 99-year life where he made an indelible mark on the State of Alaska. Vic's legacy of dedicated public service continues to touch the lives of all Alaskans, and we will miss his kindness, compassion, and mentorship.

In his early life, Vic Fischer witnessed firsthand the regimes of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. He came to the United States at 15 years old and quickly immersed himself in his new country, first through education and later through military service. His service in the Army during World War II took him to France, Germany, and the Philippines. This experience, along with his early years in Berlin and Moscow, helped shape his lifelong belief in the intrinsic value of democracy and human life, values which influenced his many contributions to the State of Alaska. After the war, Vic obtained a graduate degree at MIT and then came to Alaska in 1950 as Anchorage's first city planner, drawn by the promise of adventure and the freedom of opportunity.

Vic's many contributions were invaluable to the formation of Alaska as we know it today. He served in the last territorial legislature and was an active participant in Operation Statehood from its inception, believing strongly that Alaskans should be able to make decisions for their own communities as full members of the Union. As a member of this legislature, Vic co-sponsored the repeal of Alaska's death penalty, work he remained proud of throughout his life as someone who witnessed the power of an authoritarian state to kill its citizens. He played an important role as a delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention, helping draft the Alaska Constitution for our new State. Several decades later, as a State senator, Vic worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to improve Alaskan education, promote women's rights, social infrastructure, fishing rights, and much more. He remained politically active until his final months, educating Alaskans about our constitution, governance structures, and advocacy at all levels. As the author and journalist Charles Wohlforth wrote shortly after Vic's passing, "Time on Earth is only an opportunity. Fischer had a large share, and made use of it all. He remained optimistically engaged deep into his 90s, always making friends, always committed, always connecting."

Generations of Alaskans will remember Vic Fischer as a kind man with strong, clear values who committed his life to serving Alaska. Vic had a fundamental belief in the value of democracy, encouraging people to participate in their local communities, their State, and their government and to stand up against authoritarianism. He opposed discrimination in any form and emphasized the need to dedicate time and effort to those without power. Above all, he encouraged Alaskans to

exercise the civic power to vote, believing that we all have an obligation to each other and to our State to do so. Vic's lifelong work and political activism reflect his belief that Alaskans can come together to solve any problem, provided we share a love for Alaska and a willingness to do what is right.

The life and legacy of Vic Fischer will continue to inspire Alaskans across our State, and we will all miss his integrity and friendship. Our condolences are extended to his wife Jane Angvik, his children, and grandchildren.●

TRIBUTE TO JOHN RICHARDS

● Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize an outstanding leader from Missouri, Mr. John Richards. John is the CEO and general manager of Sho-Me Power Electric Cooperative out of Marshfield, MO.

In March 2023, John announced he would be retiring at the end of the year to close out a long and distinguished career of over 48 years with Sho-Me Power. He began his career with Sho-Me Power in September 1975 as a supervisor trainee in their accounting department. Less than a year later, John was promoted to an accountant, and in 1979, he became the manager of finance, later referred to as chief financial officer, a position he would hold for 37 years. In 2016, John was appointed by Sho-Me Power's board of directors to become the Cooperative's fifth CEO and general manager.

John graduated college in 1975 after studying accounting at Missouri Southern State College and University of Tulsa. He later received his master of business administration from Drury University in 1978. While in school, John interned for KAMO Power and was later hired on full-time before moving to Sho-Me Power.

John has been a resident of Springfield, MO, for several decades and is glad to call it home. He is involved in his community and has volunteered at his church for many years. He welcomes more opportunities for community engagement that retirement will offer. In his retirement, John most looks forward to spending more time with his four granddaughters, traveling with his wife, golfing, and "not having to drive on I-44 every day."

I applaud John for his 48 years of leadership, dedication, and selfless service to Sho-Me Power Electric Cooperative, and I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in honoring his incredible career and wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement.●

RECOGNIZING CHOWAN UNIVERSITY

● Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Chowan University, a North Carolina institution of higher education that has long served our great State and this Nation.