

TRIBUTE TO DR. LAURENCE B. ALEXANDER

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Dr. Laurence B. Alexander for his exceptional and transformative leadership as his tenure as the ninth chancellor of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff comes to a close.

Dr. Alexander set ambitious goals for UAPB when he arrived on campus, and as a result of his steadfast and unwavering pursuit of excellence, the school has met or exceeded many of those aspirations. Over the past 11 years with Dr. Alexander at the helm, UAPB experienced its largest increase in graduation rates in over a decade. From 2016 to today, UAPB's 6-year graduation rate has increased from 23 percent to 40 percent, an increase of almost 75 percent. UAPB also experienced its highest retention rates in the school's history at 77 percent. Under his leadership, UAPB achieved recognition as a Top-25 public Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the U.S. News and World Report and rose to the 15th ranked institution in the Washington Monthly ranking of Bachelor's Colleges. Dr. Alexander's hand in that success has been very clear to the surrounding community. He was recognized in 2017 by the Arkansas Business Journal Influencer in Education, featured as one of the Arkansas Business 200 Most Influential Leaders by Arkansas Business Publishing Group in 2018, and recognized nationally as one of the HBCU Campaign Fund's 10 Most Dominant HBCU Leaders in 2019.

His strategic vision has brought millions in additional grant funding and research dollars to the university and attracted world-class scientists and researchers, paving the way for UAPB to be recognized as a national leader in nanotechnology, biomedicine, agriculture, aquaculture, biotechnology, nutrition, water, and farm management.

As an 1890 Land-Grant Institution, UAPB has continued to fulfill its mission to promote education in agriculture, Arkansas' largest industry. With the average age of today's farmer being over 57 years old, it is schools like UAPB, with leaders like Dr. Alexander, that are helping develop the next generation of agriculturalists who will make critical advancements to meet the needs of today's producers.

Along with advancing UAPB's high-quality teaching and nursing programs and promoting the stellar Reserve Officers Training Corps program, Dr. Alexander has been instrumental in establishing new agricultural engineering, hospitality management, and master of business administration programs. UAPB is empowering students with real skills they can use to serve their communities and address some of Arkansas' greatest needs.

Dr. Alexander's impact reaches well beyond the city of Pine Bluff, Jefferson County, and even Arkansas State lines. He became the first leader of an 1890

Land-Grant Institution to be appointed to serve as chair of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development, which advises the U.S. Agency for International Development on how to leverage the expertise and assets of American universities to support food security and development efforts abroad.

I congratulate Dr. Alexander on his exceptional and impactful tenure at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and thank him for all he has done.

While Dr. Alexander's time in the Natural State has come to close, he has certainly left it better than he found it. Thanks to his efforts, UAPB has plenty to look forward to on the horizon. For that, all Arkansans are grateful.

I wish him the very best as he moves on to his next endeavor and hope he knows he will always have a home in Arkansas.●

TRIBUTE TO LYNN HELMS

• Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I rise to honor the 26 years of distinguished service of a remarkable North Dakota public servant who retired June 30.

Lynn Helms, longtime director of the North Dakota Department of Mineral Resources, has been an invaluable and supportive resource to me in the U.S. Senate, as he was when I served in the House of Representatives and the North Dakota Public Service Commission. Through all these years, he made himself available whenever I asked, testifying at hearings, meeting with other lawmakers and regulators, and always providing wise and valued counsel to me and my staff.

He is a treasure, not just to North Dakota, but to the entire energy industry. He is a spectacular regulator who understands the role of regulation, the role of rich mineral resources in North Dakota, and the contribution of these resources to American security and America's economy.

In the Senate, I worked with him on several efforts and initiatives. A notable collaboration included the RE-GROW Act, a bipartisan bill to remediate the Nation's orphaned wells, which was built off the State program Lynn implemented. His leadership helped secure its inclusion in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which was signed into law on November 2021.

A graduate of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Lynn spent his early years as a petroleum engineer with Texaco and the Hess Corporation. Since 1998, as the director of the North Dakota Oil and Gas Division and now the Department of Mineral Resources, he has had a front row seat to oil and gas development in our State. Through the ups and downs and challenges and triumphs, he helped steer North Dakota's petroleum industry through decades of responsible growth.

He is the consummate professional, explaining to all of us the intricate challenges of regulating the drilling and production of North Dakota's oil and gas resources. His genial demeanor and steady voice during his 26 years with the State helped us all navigate through this epic time in our State's history.

Today, North Dakota's economy is thriving due to the sensible energy development policies and reasonable regulations the State has championed. As a leading oil producing State, North Dakota's petroleum industry enhances the quality of life for our residents now and well into the future.

During Lynn's tenure, the State's average daily oil production increased from 99,217 barrels per day in 1998 to an alltime high of 1,519,037 in 2019 before stabilizing. Under his supervision, natural gas capture also reached an alltime high of more than 3.5 billion cubic feet per day.

It will take decades for the impact of Lynn Helms' contributions to our State to be adequately measured. On a personal note, I will miss working with him as a valued colleague. On behalf of all North Dakotans, I thank him for his years of service to the State of North Dakota. I congratulate him on his well-earned retirement and wish him many years of health and happiness in the future.●

RECOGNIZING BARN WIRED

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Barn Wired of Sigourney, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

The owner of Barn Wired, Amanda Snakenberg embodies the essence of American entrepreneurship. Amanda sold personally designed barn boards and barbed-wired signs at craft fairs and farmers markets across Iowa as a side hustle that eventually led to the opening of Barn Wired in 2015. After 2 years of renting, Amanda's passion and dedication led her family to purchase a brick-and-mortar storefront on the historic downtown square in Sigourney that is located next to the town mural, offering a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all her customers. Barn Wired evolved from a specialty home decor business to a multifunctional community hub where not only can you buy one-of-a-kind crafts and home decorations, it also houses the only full-service coffee shop in the town. Barn Wired is no stranger to hosting community gatherings, wedding rehearsal dinners, class reunions, and special holidays.

Today, Barn Wired employs 12 people throughout the community and will soon celebrate its 10th anniversary. Barn Wired offers a great selection of home-cooked meals, smoked meats,

fresh salads, and more with Amanda and her team always ready to host live performers, providing entertainment and supporting local entrepreneurs.

Barn Wired prioritizes community involvement. Amanda introduced initiatives such as Ladies' Night Around the Square and a community farmers market to showcase Sigourney's amazing businesses. She also collaborated with welding students, an autobody shop, and a local family to design planters for the town. Amanda herself sits on the July 4th planning committee, is a former board member for the Keokuk County Expo Fair, and was selected to be a representative on the Empower Rural Iowa Taskforce.

Barn Wired is also a member of the Keokuk County Economic Development Coalition, which helps businesses across the county not only survive but thrive.

Amanda's journey with Barn Wired is a testament to the power of hard work, passion, and community engagement. I applaud her entrepreneurial spirit and unwavering dedication to the Keokuk County community. Congratulations to the Snakenberg family and the entire team at Barn Wired. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa.●

RECOGNIZING BLACK SHEEP COFFEE BAA

● Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Black Sheep Coffee Baa of Greene, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

After spending 30 years in the law and tax industries, Connie Debner founded Black Sheep Coffee Baa in 2015. The coffee shop offers a space for customers to gather and relax while enjoying a cup of coffee or tea and roasts coffee beans locally. They offer a wide selection of products including lattes, frappes, coffee flights, tea, and smoothies.

In 2018, Black Sheep Coffee Baa partnered with Clayton's Bakery to add food to their menu including cinnamon rolls, scones, pies, pizza, and even options for Taco Tuesday. Always prioritizing the customer experience, Black Sheep Coffee Baa also developed a mobile app for folks to conveniently place orders online. The business has grown into a community hub that provides catering services and rental spaces for folks in Butler County.

Black Sheep Coffee Baa has been featured in numerous food blogs across the State and is an active member of the Iowa food scene thanks to their great customer service, welcoming storefront, and top-notch food. Connie is also actively involved in the Iowa Restaurant Association, National Federation of Independent Business, and

the Butler-Grundy Development Alliance. This year, the team at Black Sheep Coffee Baa is celebrating their ninth business anniversary.

Black Sheep Coffee Baa's commitment to providing not only high-quality coffee, teas, and food but creating a community hub in Greene, IA, is clear. I want to congratulate Connie Debner and the entire team at Black Sheep Coffee Baa, and I look forward to watching their business continue to thrive.●

RECOGNIZING L&J INDUSTRIES, INC.

● Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize L&J Industries of Charles City, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

L&J Welding was founded in 1965 by James Garden as a welding and repair shop in Charles City. In 1986, James's son Chris started his career at L&J Welding after graduating with a degree in business from North Iowa Area Community College. In 1989, L&J Welding changed its name to L&J Industries, and James continued to grow the business with the support of his wife Lillian. They passed the torch to their son and daughter-in-law Chris and Lisa Garden in 2003.

L&J Industries renovated their space in 2018 and converted it into an employee breakroom while simultaneously expanding their manufacturing plant. Today, they are known for manufacturing "Free-Flow Floor Supports" for grain bins both domestically and abroad.

L&J Industries is a three-generation, family-owned-and-operated business with Chris and Lisa's children Jacie and Brady joining the team in 2022. The Garden family has been instrumental in connecting L&J Industries to the Charles City community and ensuring they remain in the same location on Cleveland Avenue.

In 2002, it had been 37 years since James Garden founded L&J Industries when he sadly passed away. Prior to founding L&J Industries, James served in the U.S. Army during World War II and was an active member of VFW Post 4335. James Garden is succeeded by his wonderful family who continue his legacy of leadership, hard work, and service to his country and community.

The Garden family is actively involved in the Charles City and Floyd County communities. For example, Chris is a member of the Charles City Rotary Club that leads the planning of the Santa's Shining Lights Show to provide the community with holiday festivities, and Lisa served on the board of The Learning Center, as well as a spokesperson for their fundraising. The city recognized their efforts, and

in September 2010, L&J Industries received the Renew Rural Iowa Entrepreneur Award from the Iowa Farm Bureau.

Three generations of the Garden family exemplify the American dream. I want to congratulate the family and the entire team at L&J Industries for their continued commitment to the Charles City community. As they move forward and continue to provide quality manufacturing services for the agriculture industry, the next generation of the Gardens will be inspired to uphold the values of the family business and take it to new heights.●

RECOGNIZING MILLHOLLOW

● Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, as a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each month I recognize and celebrate the American entrepreneurial spirit by highlighting the success of a small business in my home State of Idaho. Today, I am pleased to honor Millhollow as the Idaho Small Business of the Month for July 2024.

Established in 1982, Millhollow was the first soft-frozen yogurt shop in southeast Idaho. Founded by Joe Romney after he moved from San Luis Obispo, CA, to Rexburg, ID, the shop brought a "taste of California," job opportunities, and real-world experiences to the community and Joe's three children. When Joe's son, Aaron, returned from his church mission in Argentina, Aaron took over the family restaurant. Over the years, Millhollow gained significant popularity, and Aaron and his wife Connie decided to expand the restaurant. In 1995, they opened a new location in downtown Rexburg, extending the menu to include toasted sandwiches, salads, catering, and more.

Driven by Joe's vision to provide his children with the chance to learn about responsibility and instill in them a strong work ethic, Millhollow continues to give the next generation an opportunity to give back to their community. Aaron and Connie carried forward this "all hands-on deck" approach to foster a work environment where Idaho's youth can actively contribute to the restaurant's operations and growth.

Congratulations to the Romneys and all the employees at Millhollow on their selection as the Idaho Small Business of the Month for July 2024. Thank you for serving Idaho as small business owners and entrepreneurs. You make our great State proud, and I look forward to your continued growth and success.●

TRIBUTE TO SUZANNE DOWNING

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay a special tribute to a very special Alaskan, Suzanne Downing. Suzanne turned 70 this year, and—big news for Alaska—sold her news site Must Read Alaska to businessman Jon Faulkner of Homer, who has already