

from a young age. He long harbored dreams of opening a restaurant in the United States, but it was not until 1998—on the heels of his daughter earning a rowing scholarship at Boston University—that Billy made this dream a reality. He and his family moved to Chicago, and Billy soon fell deeply in love with the city, a love affair that would last until his final days.

In Chicago, Billy combined his love for the restaurant industry with his love for Ireland, opening the bar, the Irish Oak, in the Wrigleyville neighborhood. In the wake of the bar's success, he opened several other bars and restaurants across the city, establishing himself as a mainstay of Chicago culture and eventually creating the Gage Hospitality Group. But what made Billy special was that he channeled his business power into political power, using his growing success to give back to both Chicago and America's Irish communities.

Namely, Billy became a fierce advocate for undocumented Irish immigrants and a staunch proponent of immigration reform. In pursuit of these ends, he was a board member and co-founder of the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition, chair of the Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform, and he was a leader of the Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights. In short, he was a tireless champion of the Irish diaspora in the United States. It was over the matter of immigration reform—a matter to which I have devoted a large portion of my policy efforts over my career in public office—that Billy and I bonded. His work on immigrant and refugee rights in Chicago was invaluable. We all owe him a debt of gratitude.

Even from across the Atlantic Ocean, his commitment to the Irish people remained steadfast. And this did not go unnoticed. In 2015, Billy joined the ranks of those such as President John F. Kennedy when he was made a Freeman of Galway, an honorary title given to valued members of the community. In 2016, then-Taoiseach Enda Kenny nominated Billy to the Seanad, the Irish Senate, where he served one term as a member of the Seanad Independent Group. In this role, he served as an overseas Irish Senator for the Irish diaspora, the first person ever to hold that title. In that role, he gave voice to the hundreds of thousands of Irish men and women living in the U.S. and across the world.

In a lot of ways, Billy represents the American dream. He came to this country with hope for prosperity. And he quickly found it. But, despite his success, he never forgot where he came from. To the contrary—it was his love for Ireland, his passion for the rights of immigrants and refugees, and his commitment to making sure America lived up to its ideals that motivated him to give back to both of the countries he considered home. He was a businessman of integrity, a political force to be

reckoned with, and most importantly, a genuinely good man. In asking how he could use his position to give back, he made our Nation better.

My wife Loretta and I send our deepest condolences to Billy's wife Anne; his four children Amy, Clodagh, Billy Jr., and John Paul; and his eight grandchildren on their tremendous loss. Billy was a lot of things. But he took most pride in being a loving husband, father, and grandfather.

Though we will no longer get to feel the warmth of his embrace, and though we will certainly feel the pain of his loss, Billy's remarkable legacy will live on across oceans—in pints of beer and the fight for immigration reform alike. We will miss him dearly.

#### TRIBUTE TO NANCY SAGE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in the Jewish faith, there is a central concept known as "tikkun olam." Literally translated, it means "world repair," and it has come to represent many Jewish individuals' commitment to bettering the world around them. While I do not practice Judaism, I share this idea that each of us has a role to play in bettering our communities. And Nancy Sage has done just that in my hometown of Springfield, IL.

Executive director of the Springfield Jewish Federation for nearly a decade, Nancy has strengthened the Jewish community and improved the lives of countless people in Springfield. Prior to taking this role, Nancy had served as a volunteer for the National Jewish Federation Board. When Nancy was approached to apply for the position of executive director, she knew she could not pass up the opportunity to give back to two communities she cared deeply about: the Springfield community and the Jewish community.

In her role, she has created partnerships between the Jewish community and other religious and racial groups to address challenges such as interfaith harmony and food insecurity. An example of her leadership can be found in her work to educate her community about Julius Rosenwald as part of Springfield's Rosenwald Initiative, which brought together the Jewish and Black communities to honor the life of Springfield-born philanthropist Julius Rosenwald and his work to educate African-Americans in the rural South.

But her work has reached beyond Springfield and benefited communities across the country and world—Jewish and non-Jewish, alike. Under her leadership, the Jewish Federation of Springfield's Annual Campaign successfully raised money for the Jewish Federation of North America to bring humanitarian funds to sites of natural disaster and social upheaval. These efforts supported communities in need, regardless of religion or nationality.

But, of course, Nancy's work was primarily centered around supporting Springfield's Jewish community, mak-

ing sure that every Jewish person felt that they had a home. This work became especially important in the wake of the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack in Israel, which claimed the lives of more than 1,200 Jewish people, saw more than 250 hostages abducted, and contributed to a rise in anti-Semitism across the world. In response to her diligent, empathetic, and determined work keeping Springfield safe for all community members, the FBI awarded the Jewish Federation of Springfield with the FBI Director Community Leadership Award, which Nancy accepted on behalf of the organization. The award recognizes the achievements of those working to better their communities by promoting education and violence prevention.

But that is far from the only recognition Nancy has received for her work strengthening Jewish identity, promoting religious and cultural understanding, and supporting Springfield's diverse community. As a past chair of the Small Cities Division of the Jewish Federations of North America, she received national recognition for her professionalism and work in community building.

After nearly a decade in her role of executive director and a lifetime committed to the idea of tikkun olam, Nancy will retire from her role this year. Loretta and I join our neighbors in Springfield in thanking Nancy for her tireless work making our community stronger and more resilient. We are grateful for all you have done for our hometown.

Nancy, in your work and in the values with which you live your life, you represent the best of Springfield. I wish you and your family all the best in this new chapter of your lives.

#### TRIBUTE TO BARBARA EHARDT AND RECOGNIZING AMERICAN WOMEN IN SPORTS DAY

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, today, I join Idaho State Representative Barbara Ehardt to recognize and honor her enduring fight to protect title IX and the freedoms of female athletes.

For more than 50 years, title IX has been instrumental in leveling the playing field for women's sports. It has ensured safer and fairer competition and opened doors to incredible opportunities for generations of American girls and women. By recognizing the fundamental, biological differences between men and women, title IX allows each to pursue educational programs and activities equally, including athletics. Title IX is not just a bureaucratic regulation; it is a representation of our dedication to fairness and opportunity for men and women.

Representative Ehardt is quick to say that title IX changed her life. It gave her opportunities to participate and win in school athletics—eventually propelling her to a 15-year career as a NCAA Division I women's basketball coach. Representative Ehardt's story is

echoed by countless women across the county who have worked tirelessly to compete in the sport they love.

Generations of Americans have devoted themselves to promoting and advancing women's sports, including right here in the Gem State. In 2020, Idaho became first in the Nation to enact legislation that protects female athletes through the Fairness in Women's Sports Act. I thank Representative Ehardt for spearheading this bill and Idaho Governor Brad Little for signing it. The Fairness in Women's Sports Act protects the integrity of women's sports and guarantees fair competition for Idaho's female athletes.

Despite more than 50 years of progress, threats to dismantle and distort the protections in title IX persist. Today, Americans fear the loss of safety and opportunity for their daughters in education and athletics.

In Congress, I will continue to fight to protect fairness in women's athletics and defend the provisions in title IX from these dangerous attacks. We must not erase the contributions of women and girls in athletics. We must empower and provide the framework that allows young girls and women to play, compete, and win.

With the support and incredible work of people like Representative Ehardt, I am certain we will ensure these rights for women in Idaho and beyond. I am proud to deliver Representative Barbara Ehardt with this gold letter in recognition of her devotion to fairness in women's sports and selfless efforts to provide Idaho girls and women with opportunities to succeed.

#### REMEMBERING DR. ELEAZER ROOT

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to ask that the Senate join me in honoring an accomplished Revolutionary War veteran, doctor, and former president of the Columbia County Medical Society of New York, Dr. Eleazer Root. Dr. Root dedicated his life to serving his community and his country, and it is a privilege to recognize him here today in honor of his grave dedication on October 13, 2024.

On July 28, 1764, in Coventry, CT, Eleazer Root was born to Thomas Root. In the face of uncertainty for the future of North America, Root enlisted in 1779 at the young age of 15 to serve with the patriots and helped usher out an era of aristocracy and monarchy in favor of establishing a republic democracy which stands strong to this day.

Stationed in West Point, NY, Root served there for 1 year. Following his service in the war, he traveled north to Spencertown, NY. It was there he began his pursuit of a career in medicine.

Dr. Root's medical career was met with much success, made evident by his appointment as president of the county medical society in Columbia County, NY. This position served as a

testament to his expertise in medical care and leadership.

While in Spencertown, Dr. Root would go on to marry Lucinda Bostwick, also from Coventry, CT, in 1793. They then relocated within Columbia County to a city called Canaan, where they would plant their roots and raise a family. While in Canaan, their 10 children were born: 7 sons and 3 daughters. Many of Dr. Root's children would go on to share his passion for service of others, three of which followed in Dr. Root's footsteps, becoming doctors themselves.

Following his 48 years of continual, dedicated service to the greater Columbia County region, he eventually relocated to the Michigan Territory in 1834. He moved to Manchester, MI, in Washtenaw County, just 8 years after the city's establishment.

Then tragically on January 31, 1837, just 4 years after his migration to what will come to be known as the Great Lakes State, Dr. Root passed away at the age of 72. He became the first grave to be buried in the Oak Grove Cemetery in Manchester. His wife Lucinda was buried by his side 12 years later, following her passing, where they both remain to this day.

His immense passion and care for the serving his community have had lasting impacts that supersede centuries, culminating to his honoring here today on the Senate floor. He helped fight to make the Nation we see before us today and led a life of service. Dr. Root's grave serves as a poignant reminder that the freedom and independence we enjoy today was brought about by the sacrifice and service of others.

I trust that my colleagues here in the Senate will join me in honoring Dr. Eleazer Root for his contributions to the freedoms and liberties we enjoy today, as well as his lifetime of service to the public health of his local community.

#### RECOGNIZING THE U.S. SKI & SNOWBOARD TEAM

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the U.S. Ski & Snowboard teams as they prepare for the 2026 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Milano-Cortina, Italy.

For nearly 120 years, U.S. Ski & Snowboard has provided leadership, support and direction for young athletes as they work to achieve excellence in their sports. U.S. Ski & Snowboard athletes participate in 10 different Olympic sports, including alpine skiing, para snowboarding, cross country skiing, ski jumping, and many others. At a typical Winter Olympics, U.S. Ski & Snowboard athletes compose more than half of Team USA. In the 2022 Olympic Winter Games in Beijing, U.S. Ski & Snowboard athletes won 60 percent of Team USA's medals. These able-bodied and adaptive athletes share a commitment to excellence, team work, and fair competition.

To Coloradans, skiing and snowboarding are more than just sports; they are part of our State's rich history. During World War II, 15,000 soldiers traveled to Camp Hale—located between Leadville and Red Cliff, CO, in the high alpine terrain of the Rocky Mountains—to train to defeat the Nazis. These Americans formed the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division. Among them were the best skiers in America. The men of the 10th Mountain Division trained relentlessly in 10 feet of snow and temperatures of 50 below zero. In 1945, 10th Mountain soldiers climbed more than 1,800 feet up a Riva Ridge and scaled Mount Belvedere to surprise the Germans who believed their position in the Alps was unassailable. The 10th Mountain Division took the skills they learned in the Colorado mountains and punched a hole through the German line to clear the way for Allied victory in Europe.

After the war, veterans of the 10th Mountain Division founded Colorado's ski and outdoor recreation industries, including ski resorts like Steamboat Springs and Vail. As a result of their hard work, Steamboat Springs has produced more Winter Olympians than any other town in the United States, and Vail is now known as the birthplace of the most decorated ski racer of all time, Mikaela Shiffrin.

I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our deepest gratitude and appreciation to the U.S. Ski & Snowboard team and its able-bodied and adaptive athletes for inspiring all of us as they compete on the international stage and for their positive representation of American ideals throughout the world.

#### TRIBUTE TO KRISTINE HANISCH

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, today, I rise to honor and recognize the extraordinary career of Kristine Hanisch, whose dedication to the U.S. Senate spans over 35 years. During her storied tenure, Kris has diligently and graciously served in the offices of four U.S. Senators: Senators Symms, Craig, Allard, and myself. She has witnessed and contributed to a significant chapter of American and Senate history.

Kris's journey from a small town in north Idaho to a senior position in the U.S. Senate is a testament to her determination and commitment to improving the lives of others. Few possess Kris's depth of knowledge about the inner workings of the U.S. Senate. Her insights and understanding of the legislative process have made her a valuable asset to our team and to the institution as a whole.

In addition to her many accomplishments, Kris was involved with, and at one point led, the Administrative Managers Steering Committee—a select, bipartisan group of administrative managers and chief clerks chosen to represent their peers in the Senate community. This committee focuses on influencing solutions that improve efficiency and modernize operations within the Senate. She was a member of the