

candor of all these different facets of her life experience together to address the specific needs of veterans and their families.

Chris immediately continued to build strong relationships with veterans and veteran's organizations across the State, demonstrating time and time again to Wisconsin's veteran community that our team works hard and gets results. She was recognized as being tough but fair in her work, holding Agencies accountable and garnering respect and trust throughout the State by her approach. She has helped veterans and their families establish closure through obtaining missing service records and medals, fought for pay and services owed to them, and tackled systemic problems in the VA medical system to address incorrect diagnoses and quality of care issues. Her efforts have made a lasting and positive impact on both individual veterans and the wider veterans community in Wisconsin.

When news spread about Chris's upcoming retirement, I heard from many Wisconsin veterans about the quality of her work, her compassion, and her dedication to service. To have earned that kind of respect says all that needs to be said for what Chris means to our office and the work she has done. We will miss her leadership, enthusiasm, and steadfast commitment to service.

Chris, thank you for your service to our nation. And thank you for your service to the veterans of Wisconsin.

#### RECOGNIZING THE CENTENNIAL OF COLUMBIA SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Columbia Savings and Loan Association on its 100th anniversary. It gives me great pleasure to honor this remarkable organization and to commemorate this historic milestone.

Founded by Ardie and Wilbur Halyard in 1924 in Milwaukee, WI, Columbia Savings and Loan is the first—and currently only—African-American owned bank in Wisconsin. For 100 years, Columbia has been dedicated to supporting and uplifting the Milwaukee community, primarily serving low- and moderate-income families in Milwaukee. Now led by Ernest Jones and Will Martin, who continue to uphold the values of its founders, Columbia celebrates its centennial anniversary.

When the Columbia Savings and Loan Association was first founded, the beginnings of discriminatory redlining practices were emerging in Wisconsin. Thousands of Black families were forced to live in the so-called “black belt” in Milwaukee, with similar situations occurring across the United States. These communities struggled to build wealth as insured mortgages were not available to them. However, during that dark time, Columbia Savings and Loan was steadfast in turning the tides and to supporting the Afri-

can-American community in Milwaukee.

One of the many lasting impacts that Columbia has etched into Milwaukee's history is the rise of the Halyard Park area, in the heart of the city. After the construction of Interstate 43, many homes were demolished, displacing many residents. At a time when banks still practiced discriminatory mortgage policies against African Americans, fair housing advocates Ardie and Wilbur Halyard focused on financing for Black individuals and families to revitalize the neighborhood with backing of the Columbia Savings and Loan. Throughout the years, Halyard Park grew and is now a cornerstone of the city of Milwaukee, from hosting various music performances and art shows to being home to some of Milwaukee's well-known restaurants. Without the help of Columbia and its founders, Halyard Park would not be what it is today. While other neighborhoods have seen high population turnover and decreased home values, Halyard Park residents have stayed and have boasted higher valued homes.

After the savings and loans crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, hundreds of savings and loans organizations were impacted across the Nation, with many having to close. But Columbia survived, is thriving, and is one of the only left in Wisconsin. I applaud their hard work and dedication to serving the Milwaukee community over the last 100 years. Countless people and families have had their lives changed because of the Columbia Savings and Loan Association. I look forward to the association's continued success in the years to come.

#### RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT MEN'S SOCCER TEAM

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, all of Vermont celebrates the University of Vermont Men's Soccer Team on winning the NCAA Men's Soccer National Championship.

The UVM Men's Soccer Team affectionately known as the “Cardiac Catamounts,” pulled off a historic comeback on Monday, December 16 to win 2-1 against Marshall University after a 95th minute golden goal, earning their first title in program history and becoming the first team in the America East Conference to win a national championship.

It was a game for the record books, literally Marcell Papp's perfectly timed goal gave the Catamounts a golden opportunity in overtime, and Maximilian Kissel's winning goal—his 11th of the season—will be remembered for all time.

The entire squad—Niklas Herceg, Lou Liedtka, Nathan Siméon, Mike Bleeker, Cole Richardson, Adrian Schulze Solano, Connor Thompson, Andrew Millar, Niels Hartman, Maximilian Kissel, Nick Lockermann, Yaniv Bazini, Nash Barlow, David Ismail, Ethan Czapowski, Gianluca

Armellino, Ioanis Vassiliou, Marcell Papp, Toby Grant, Karl Daly, Sydney Wathuta, TJ Liquori, Pieter Bultman, Ryan Zellefrow, Zach Barrett, Jeremy Tsang, Max Murray, and Mitchell Ringman—played an important part in this season's success.

To the casual observer, the Catamounts may have been the tournament's underdogs or a Cinderella story. But to the team and the Vermonters rooting for them back home, this championship win was not a fluke or a lucky break. It was inevitable.

In the 2024 season, the Catamounts scored 22 goals in the 76th minute or later, with the championship equalizing goal being no exception. Late game victories were a habit for the Catamounts this tournament, beating San Diego University in overtime during the third-round match and tying the University of Denver in the dying minutes of the semifinal match to push the game into penalty kicks, where a save from Catamounts goalkeeper Niklas Herceg secured the Catamounts a ticket to the finals.

The Cardiac Catamounts is only the third unseeded program to win a championship since the National Collegiate Athletic Association expanded the tournament to 16 seeded teams in 2003.

The Cats have shown heart, persistence, and never lost their cool all season, Vermont Values through and through. With this championship, the Catamounts put UVM athletics on display and made all of us proud to cheer for Vermont.

I congratulate the University of Vermont Men's Soccer Team for their well-deserved championship win and for representing the values of Vermont.

And a special congratulations to the Catamounts' Head Coach Rob Dow and his wife Loren Bowley Dow, who welcomed their second child Russel only weeks ago.

This is a team of champions, not underdogs. They have made Vermont very proud.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO JEFF REH

● Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today, I want to recognize Salina, KS, native Jeff Reh upon his well-earned retirement after more than four decades of dedicated service.

Jeff is a graduate of Kansas State University and American University Washington College of Law. While pursuing his degrees, Jeff worked as an intern on Capitol Hill for Senator Bob Dole, worked at the Pentagon, and, tapping into his entrepreneurial spirit, started a consulting business during law school.

Jeff's career then led him to join the oldest active firearm manufacturer and one of the oldest continuously operating companies in the world, Beretta.

Initially working as a consultant to Beretta USA Corporation, he played an

integral role in Beretta successfully signing a contract to make the M9 the service pistol for the U.S. military in 1985. Jeff was brought in-house to be the general counsel for Beretta USA in the mid-1980s, a position he held until his retirement 41 years later.

After the Maryland Legislature passed strict anti-gun legislation that prevented Marylanders from purchasing legal firearms manufactured in their own backyard, Jeff helped Beretta USA relocate its manufacturing plant to Gallatin, TN.

Jeff was instrumental in the founding of the Hunting and Shooting Sports Heritage Foundation in 1999 and served as chairman of its firearms litigation support committee.

Since 2002, Jeff has served on the board of governors of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the firearm and ammunition industry trade association, and since 2007, served as vice chairman of the board. He also served on the board of directors of the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, the industry's ANSI-accredited standard setting organization, for 23 years, including 6 years as chairman and 4 years as vice chairman.

Beretta is renowned in the industry for superior quality and performance. According to his peers, the same can be said of Jeff. He is a man of high caliber. Not only is he a skilled skeet shooter and an avid upland bird hunter, but Jeff is also a loving husband, father, and grandfather. Jeff's passion and professional commitment is highly respected among those in the firearm industry.

As Jeff enters this next chapter in his life, I congratulate him and wish him, his wife Vickie, and their entire family all the best.●

#### TRIBUTE TO HUGH ESPEY

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Hugh Espey of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement—a friend, fellow champion of the working class, and person who has never been afraid to speak truth to power and challenge the wealthy elite and special interests.

I met Hugh in 2014 when I travelled to Iowa to hear from folks in the Midwest about the challenges they were facing and what they wanted to be done about it. And almost immediately, I met a man who had been doing just that for most of his life. You see, Hugh had been with Iowa CCI since 1979 and served as its executive director since 2003. And he has left a mark that deserves recognition.

In the heart of our country is a man and a grassroots organization that has been engaging everyday people to stand up to corporate power and right the injustices faced by the working class for 50 years. That is no small feat. When farmers were told to "get big or get out," and tens of thousands across the country, particularly the Midwest,

faced foreclosure and immense undue hardship, Hugh Espey and Iowa CCI were there. Working together, they saved numerous family farmers from foreclosure, in part by using a tool passed by this body in the seventies called the Community Reinvestment Act. Hugh and the members of Iowa CCI showed everyday people that government can and should—and needs—to work for everyday people, not the billionaires, banks, and special interests that want to divide us.

And he kept that up through the Great Recession and the challenges facing our country right now. While massive income inequality continues to grow, Hugh Espey and Iowa CCI are there in the heart of the Midwest listening and talking to the people who break their backs to help make this country great—and after hearing their stories, telling them that together we will make an economy that works for us all. Hugh and members of Iowa CCI know that it isn't the wealthy elite who built and who will maintain this country—it is the people who clock in and out every day, tend to the farm, and hold those in power accountable who will be the ones who shepherd us into the next phase of American greatness.

Throughout 45 years at Iowa CCI, Hugh has understood the plight of working Americans—because he listens, asks questions, and makes no assumptions about the pain they are feeling. It is a lesson we could all learn from. Hugh has taught, mentored, advised, and more countless community organizers who are out there making this world a better place for those of us living in it and those who will live in it.

This isn't easy work, but Hugh doesn't do things that are easy. He does the hard things that need to be done—for the worker, the farmer, the immigrant, the stranger—because he knows we are all in this together and that we all do better when we all do better.

I thank Hugh for the important work he has done over the past 45 years and for all that he will accomplish in the years to come—because even though he has retired from CCI, I know that he cannot and will not stop fighting to put people first and put our communities before corporations.●

#### 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDDING OF THE CITY OF GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

● Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the city of Greenville, NC.

Greenville is the economic, medical, educational, and cultural hub of eastern North Carolina with top-ranked educational institutions, groundbreaking medical and research facilities, a diversified base of industries, an abundance of indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities, and a down-home feel that is warm and welcoming.

Greenville's history goes back to before the Revolutionary War and the founding. In 1761, Pitt County was established and named after William Pitt, a British politician and veteran of the French and Indian War. In 1774 Martinsborough was formally founded and established as the county seat of Pitt County.

In 1787, Martinsborough was renamed Greensville after Major General Nathanael Greene, the consequential American Revolutionary War general who helped ensure American victory over the British. In 1791, Greenville hosted President George Washington during his tour of the southern States.

Sadly, a fire destroyed the Pitt County courthouse in 1857 and most of the county's existing records within it, limiting the ability for future generations to track Greenville's genealogy.

But the loss of the county courthouse did not impede the city's continued growth as a major city in eastern North Carolina. For example, in 1889, Greenville further expanded as a hub for eastern North Carolina when the first train traveled along the new railroad extension to Greenville, connecting the community to larger markets and transportation networks.

In 1907, the North Carolina General Assembly founded the East Carolina Teachers Training School. It would later join the University of North Carolina System and become East Carolina University, which continues to serve as a pillar of the community, and today graduates over 6,000 students annually.

In 1923, the first Pitt Community Hospital opened. Today, the ECU Health Medical Center is the heart of the ECU Health System, serving 1.4 million people from 29 counties across nine hospital locations.

Continuing its role as a regional hub, the city of Greenville and Pitt County purchased 500 acres of land with an airstrip in 1940 to create the region's first airport, providing service to both local residents and the military over the years.

In 1987, the city of Greenville made history by electing Edward Carter as its first African-American mayor. He had previously served for 4 years on the Greenville City Council before his election to serve as mayor.

In more recent history, the city of Greenville opened a new city hall in 2006 which includes design features intended to illustrate how government should be open and transparent to its citizens.

In 2020, Pitt County was one of the 10 counties recognized by the National Civic League as an "All-America County," highlighting the county's work on inclusive civic engagement to address health and well-being and creating stronger connections among residents.

This anniversary is a monumental occasion to celebrate and commemorate the achievements of Greenville, NC. For 250 years, the city has served as a regional hub for eastern North Carolina and a place where you will find yourself in good company.