

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO RALPH M. OAKLEY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 1993, Quincy, IL, experienced the worst flooding in the Gem City's history. Over a span of a few short weeks, thousands of acres of farmland were covered with multiple feet of water. Businesses and livelihoods became submerged, and Illinoisans were in desperate need of disaster relief. And before the era of smartphones and social media, there was a time when broadcast stations were many people's only source for local news. For Quincy, that station was WGEM-TV.

Owned by the Oakley family, who at the time had more than five generations in the news industry, WGEM provided nonstop coverage of the floods across west central Illinois. WGEM told families where to go for shelter, informed concerned citizens of how they could help, and dispelled rumors that undermined disaster response. For more than 600 straight hours, WGEM was in the eye of the storm, giving Illinoisans the information they needed to stay safe. Ralph Oakley, station vice president and general manager, worked to ensure the station spared no expense to cover the flood. WGEM, without concern for ad sales or commercial revenues, showed up for its community in its time of need. On March 3, the National Association of Broadcasters will be awarding Ralph with the Chuck Sherman Television Leadership Award in recognition of his contributions to his community and local broadcasting. I can think of no better recipient for such an honor than Ralph Oakley.

While working in the broadcast industry is the dream of so many, for Ralph it was destiny. Since 1891, four generations of Oakleys before him had managed the various Quincy newspapers and television stations. Thomas, Ralph's father, was president and CEO of Quincy Newspapers, Inc., and worked diligently to bring the company's papers and channels to more homes across Illinois. In 1977, when he was just 21 years old and still pursuing a degree at Quincy University, then known as Quincy College, Ralph joined the family business. He learned the ropes at Quincy's own WGEM AM-FM-TV before traveling to Indiana and West Virginia to work at QNI's various stations.

But Ralph would not stay away for long. By 1993, he moved back to Quincy and was promoted to vice president and chief operating officer of QNI's Broadcast Division. He continued to rise through the ranks of QNI, eventually becoming president and CEO of the

company in 2009, after his father's retirement. As he thrived at QNI, Ralph also became involved in national broadcasting advocacy. He served as chairman of the Illinois Broadcasters Association and as a board member of the National Association of Broadcasters—working to ensure Americans in any city, town, or county had access to the emergency alerts, educational content, and community news that broadcasting provides. While Ralph has since retired from QNI following its sale in 2021, he remains involved in broadcasting, owning a station that serves Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Ralph's passion for broadcasting is only matched by his commitment to Quincy, carrying on his father's advocacy for development in western and central Illinois. In 1997, Ralph led the establishment of the Community Foundation with one simple goal: to make it possible for "anyone and everyone to realize their philanthropic wishes." For 29 years, the Community Foundation has raised more than \$10 million for various nonprofits in west central Illinois and northeast Missouri. Organizations ranging from Quincy's own Blessing Hospital to the Quincy Symphony Orchestra have received generous support from the Community Foundation, allowing them to continue their great work in service of their community. In 2022, the Community Foundation celebrated its 25th anniversary, and in honor of this milestone, Ralph donated \$2 million to establish the Ralph Oakley Family Fund, cementing his support for families and communities across Illinois for years to come.

Ralph's philanthropy for Quincy and the surrounding community extends beyond the Community Foundation. He served on the boards of both the Quincy Area Chamber of Commerce and the Quincy Public Schools Foundation and chaired the United Way of Adams County's annual campaign. Ralph also continues to support his alma mater Quincy University, after serving as chairman of the university's board of trustees from 1999 to 2004. In 2021, Ralph and the Oakley family made the largest contribution in the university's history to create new scholarships, classrooms, and programs. Quincy University is the lifeblood of the Gem City, and the Oakley family donation will help ensure that it remains ready and able to support the region for generations to come.

Ralph's legacy can be felt in the broadcasting industry and across Illinois. His work both in and outside of the studio makes him well deserving of the Chuck Sherman Television Leadership Award. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to my friend Ralph on this accomplishment and thank him for all he has done in service to his community.

225TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWN OF LEEDS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, in 1801, a small town nestled between Androscoggin Lake and River was incorporated and named after Leeds, England, the ancestral home of the first settlers Thomas and Roger Stinchfield. Today, it is an honor to join the people of Leeds, ME, in celebrating the 225th anniversary of a community that is a beautiful place to live, work, and raise a family.

Leeds, initially part of the Littleborough Plantation, was settled as early as the 1780s, with fertile land and plentiful water nourishing the first families. As Leeds developed, so did agriculture and small-scale manufacturing that proved to be not only self-sufficient but also the backbone of its economy. By the mid-19th century, improved roads connected Leeds to other surrounding communities that made it a center for agriculture and, eventually, recreation. Today, Leeds' natural beauty has led to the rise of boating and fishing on Androscoggin Lake, turning quaint farmstands into a seasonal retreat in central Maine.

The proud history of Leeds is etched in stone atop Monument Hill, where the Civil War Peace Monument stands as a tribute to the town's extraordinary service. Erected by the distinguished Howard brothers in 1895, this monument honors the 161 local soldiers and sailors who served in the American Civil War, in which Leeds had the highest per capita enlistment of any town in Maine. Major General Oliver Otis Howard's leadership shaped the Nation's path toward emancipation, making his impact felt today at Howard University, which he founded. The Howard brothers' commitment to freedom spanned beyond the battlefield by bringing escaped slave George Washington "Wash" Kemp, who served in the Union Army alongside both Howard brothers, back to Leeds, making it his eventual home.

Another fascinating example of Leeds' dedication to public service can be seen in the Curtis Homestead Conservation Area. The 360-acre property that once served as the home of Maine Governor Kenneth M. Curtis features remnants of a farmhouse and barn built in the 1840s, offering visitors a glimpse into life in Leeds during the 19th century.

Maine is known as Vacationland, and Leeds is one reason why. With water for recreation, nature preserves for walking and hiking, and a rich history, there is always something to explore.

The celebration of Leeds' landmark anniversary is not merely about the passage of time; it is about resilience, service, and the enduring strength of community. We honor the people of Leeds who stood together in times of war, worked together to build a thriving town, and created a legacy that spans more than two centuries. Their effort and dedication ensure that Leeds has a bright future.

TRIBUTE TO DR. MARSHALL
SCHREEDER

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, I am honored to recognize Dr. Marshall Schreeder, a distinguished physician, researcher, and community leader whose lifelong dedication to medicine has profoundly strengthened healthcare in the State of Alabama and beyond.

A native of Atlanta, GA, Dr. Schreeder has practiced medicine in Huntsville since 1979, bringing with him an exceptional blend of engineering rigor, clinical excellence, and public health insight. He completed his undergraduate education in industrial and systems engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology, an early foundation that would later shape his innovative approach to patient care and health systems. Dr. Schreeder earned both his masters of public health degree and his doctor of medicine from Tulane University, followed by an internship and residency in internal medicine at Emory University Affiliated Hospitals. He then served our Nation as a medical epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control, applying his expertise to population health and disease prevention.

Dr. Schreeder continued his advanced medical training in Alabama, completing a fellowship in hematology and medical oncology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is board certified in internal medicine and medical oncology and has authored more than 30 peer-reviewed research papers and articles addressing viral hepatitis, liver cancer, and lung cancer. He is also certified by the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy as a qualified bone marrow transplant physician, reflecting the depth and breadth of his clinical expertise.

Throughout his career, Dr. Schreeder has been a respected leader within the medical profession. He has served as president of the Alabama Society of Clinical Oncology and as president of the Medical Staff of the Huntsville Hospital System. He currently serves as chairman of the cancer committee and as a clinical associate professor of medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, mentoring future generations of physicians while advancing the standards of cancer care.

As the founder and a key figure of Clearview Cancer Institute, Dr. Schreeder is widely credited with re-engineering patient-centered oncology care, driving the institute's growth, and establishing high-quality community oncology services throughout north Alabama. His vision has ensured that patients can receive advanced, compassionate cancer care close to home. In 2014, he further demonstrated his collaborative leadership by co-founding the Southeast Lung Alliance, which has successfully coordinated lung cancer screening and care among community practices.

Dr. Schreeder's commitment to the community extends well beyond clin-

ical practice. In May 2006, he cofounded the Russell Hill Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health in north Alabama through support of innovative cancer research, education programs, and direct patient assistance. Since 2011, the foundation has contributed more than \$5.1 million to the cancer community, and Dr. Schreeder continues to serve on its board of directors. In addition, he serves as medical director of research at Clearview Cancer Institute and has delivered numerous national and State presentations, contributing extensively to the medical literature.

I am pleased to join my colleagues and the citizens of Alabama in expressing our deep appreciation to Dr. Marshall Schreeder for his extraordinary service, leadership, and compassion. His career exemplifies excellence in medicine, innovation in patient care, and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of his community. Dr. Schreeder stands as an outstanding physician and an exemplary American.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE 2026 INDUCTEES
OF THE ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE
HALL OF FAME

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and commend the distinguished individuals selected for induction into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame Class XXXVIII.

Agriculture is the backbone of Arkansas' economy and a defining part of our State's heritage. Since the Hall of Fame's founding in 1987, nearly 200 men and women have been honored for their extraordinary contributions to The Natural State's largest industry and the communities it sustains. In addition, their achievements extend not only to Arkansas, but throughout the country. This year's inductees exemplify the innovation, stewardship, and leadership that continue to strengthen agriculture in our State and beyond.

The 2026 inductees reflect excellence across a broad range of agricultural sectors, including soybeans, rice, cotton, cattle, and forestry, as well as public service at the State and national levels.

Jim Carroll III of Moro is a fourth-generation farmer whose leadership has helped expand global markets, advance research, and promote sustainable production for soybean growers nationwide. Through service on local and national boards, including as chair of the U.S. Soybean Board, he has played a key role in strengthening Arkansas' soybean industry while advocating for infrastructure improvements that protect valuable farmland in the Delta.

Joe Fox of Fayetteville has dedicated more than five decades to forestry, conservation, and wood products, helping balance economic growth and environmental stewardship. He led the effort to bring together industry, non-

profit, and government partners to establish Arkansas' largest conservation easement, and his service as Arkansas State Forester and president of the National Association of State Foresters speaks to the lasting extent of his impact.

Allen B. Helms, Jr., of Clarkedale has provided decades of leadership in cotton, soybeans, and ginning, shaping agricultural policy and innovation far beyond east Arkansas. A longtime leader in State and national agricultural organizations, his work has strengthened farm safety, efficiency, and competitiveness for producers across the country. He expertly championed the long-term viability of the cotton industry while supporting the farmers who sustain it.

The Honorable Blanche Lincoln, a native of Helena, devoted her career in public service to advancing the interests of Arkansas farmers and rural communities. As the first Arkansan and first woman to chair the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, she played a pivotal role in the passage and implementation of the 2008 farm bill and worked to preserve a strong safety net, expand conservation programs, and support critical irrigation projects in our state.

John Paul Pendergrass of Charleston represents six generations of Arkansas cattle producers. Under his management, Pendergrass Cattle Company has grown into one of the State's leading stocker and feeder operations, providing economic opportunity for small producers and contributing significantly to rural communities. He has also engaged in national conversations on global food security while continuing a long tradition of stewardship and innovation in Arkansas agriculture.

The late Benny Petrus of Stuttgart lived a life in service to agriculture, entrepreneurship, and public service in Arkansas County. Through the business he built and operated and his service in the Arkansas House of Representatives, he advocated innovation, conservation, and economic opportunity while working to strengthen rural communities and support the next generation of agricultural leaders.

These six individuals embody the values that define Arkansas agriculture: hard work, stewardship of the land, service to others, and a deep commitment to their communities. It is fitting that they be recognized by the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame, and I extend my congratulations to each inductee and their families.●

RECOGNIZING DAYTON MEAT
PRODUCTS

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair 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