

and Opportunities, CHRO, as they celebrate 75 years of dedication to eliminating discrimination and seeking equal opportunity for everyone throughout the State regardless of their gender, race, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristics.

Founded in 1943 as the Inter-racial Commission, the commission is the oldest State-sponsored civil rights agency in the United States. Originally, it researched ways to provide equal opportunities and employment to everyone in Connecticut. Thanks to the Fair Employment Practices Act, which the State implemented in 1947, the commission was provided the legal authority to investigate employment discrimination complaints, conduct hearings, and enforce the law.

Throughout the years, CHRO jurisdiction has expanded, including research, public education, and working with other groups in order to enact positive change. The commission's research division helped lay the groundwork for greater civil rights laws in Connecticut. The agency changed its name during the peak of the American civil rights movement after Governor John Dempsey responded in 1967 to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech by calling a Governor's conference on human rights and opportunities to put words into action.

Now able to help with individual complaints, CHRO works to ensure compliance with Connecticut human rights laws, including those requiring affirmative action in State agency personnel practices and State contract compliance laws. The agency further assists the people of Connecticut by bringing civil enforcement efforts against illegal discrimination in public accommodations, housing, employment, and credit transactions. Over the past three-quarters of a century, the commission has unfailingly sought to achieve its goals for the benefit of every person in the State.

Tirelessly devoted to eradicating discrimination and creating justice and equal opportunity for all Connecticut residents, CHRO is a catalyst for positive change. I applaud the commission's accomplishments and hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities on their 75 years of advocacy, education, research, and assistance.●

#### REMEMBERING A.G. RUSSELL III

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Mr. A.G. Russell III, a dear friend and respected entrepreneur and innovator who called Arkansas home and built a renowned knife and cutlery business that continues to thrive today. He passed away last month at the age of 85, leaving behind his devoted wife Goldie and many who admired and respected him from near and afar.

A.G. Russell was born in Eudora, a small town in southeast Arkansas.

Like my own father, A.G.'s dad served in World War II, and the family moved around several times throughout his childhood. From an early age, he became interested in knives, so much so that he even recalled sketching designs in the margins of his schoolbooks.

At 9 years old, A.G. made his first knife with the help of his grandfather. He continued practicing the craft as a hobby into adulthood and eventually turned his passion into a business that grew exponentially, vaulting him to celebrity status among knife producers and collectors. By the mid-1960s, Russell had set up shop in Springdale, AR, and began a journey that would define his life's work and calling.

What first began as an operation selling Arkansas whetstones used for sharpening knives grew to include production of pocket knives and cutlery, first through a mail-order operation and then expanding to internet sales. A.G. worked tirelessly to launch the enterprise and perfect his craft as a knifemaker, enjoying tremendous success and always emphasizing quality over quantity. Excellent customer service has been a hallmark of A.G. Russell Knives from day one.

A.G. was a pioneer in the industry, earning the respect and admiration of his peers while receiving numerous awards and recognition, including his induction into the Knife Digest Cutlery Hall of Fame in 1974. He also helped found the Knifemakers' Guild and was named its honorary president in 1970.

While he accomplished so much in his career, A.G. Russell also had a big heart and enjoyed giving back. He loved Goldie. He marveled at how quickly she learned the ins and outs of the retail knife business and was overjoyed as she helped the company reach new heights of success.

Drawing from his own military experience and that of his dad's, A.G. was a patriot who recognized how vital it is to support our troops. In 2004, he organized the "War on Troop Boredom," an effort to provide care packages that included books, DVDs, pocket-sized Constitutions, and other items to servicemembers stationed in the Middle East.

No one can accuse A.G. Russell of not having lived a full life. He built a remarkable career out of his passion, helping to reshape an industry and become one of its icons. Through it all, he stayed humble, genuine, and fulfilled. He perfected the craft he loved so much while continually meeting and exceeding his customers' expectations.

We will miss A.G. terribly. His warmth and humility are sometimes hard to come by these days. Simply put, there was no one quite like A.G. Russell III, and we mourn this tremendous loss. His family, his community, and the industry he stood atop of now know a void that cannot be easily filled, if ever, but his legacy will endure for many years to come.

I extend my sincere condolences to them and join with so many in cele-

brating A.G.'s life and career. I will fondly remember his impact, his story, and most importantly, his character and generosity as a lasting tribute to my friend and a man I respected so much.●

#### TRIBUTE TO DR. RAY STOWERS

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate Dr. Ray E. Stowers, the recipient of the prestigious American Osteopathic Foundation, AOF, Lifetime Achievement Award. This honor is awarded to outstanding osteopathic doctors who have made substantial contributions to the profession and exemplified a lifetime of commitment to the practice. Receiving the award at the AOF honors gala, Dr. Stowers humbly said, "Professionally, there's always a sense of appreciation for being recognized by your profession and for that I'm very grateful."

I am grateful for Dr. Stowers' passion for improving community health and his achievements on this front.

Following the completion of his doctor of osteopathic medicine degree, Dr. Stowers served rural Kansas and Oklahoma for 25 years, establishing five rural health clinics and acting as the only physician for a 300-mile radius. With his passion for rural medicine, he went on to establish the Oklahoma Rural Health Policy and Research Center to promote clinical training and telemedicine. This kind of dedication and innovative thinking demonstrates Dr. Stowers' expertise and desire to help those in underserved areas.

Dr. Stowers, the proud father of four children and nine grandchildren, has been named Family Physician of the Year by the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians, Physician of the Year by the Tennessee Osteopathic Medical Association, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Certificate by the American Osteopathic Association.

His educational outreach is inspiring. Dr. Stowers founded the Lincoln Memorial University-DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine, and its auditorium has been named in his honor. Additionally, he acted as the associate dean for rural health at Oklahoma State University and now serves as the dean of osteopathic medicine and vice president at the Arkansas Colleges of Health Education, the first and only private institution devoted exclusively to healthcare and wellness.

When speaking of his incredible leadership accomplishments as, president of the American Osteopathic Association and Oklahoma Osteopathic Association, Dr. Stowers said, "I was just getting into a position to make a difference with the way things are. The thing that's driven me the most is looking where I could make the biggest difference." The world needs more men of the caliber and character of Dr. Stowers. He is a transformative, influential leader in the field of osteopathic