inspiring teachers, especially at Clark University in Worcester, his alma mater.

John's public journey began when he was still in college in the late 1970s, organizing fellow students to volunteer at the Mustard Seed, a Catholic worker collective in Worcester dedicated to feeding the poor and homeless. There he perfected his trademark eggplant parmesan. After graduation, John went to work for Worcester Fair Share, knocking on the doors of the three deckers of Grafton Hill in a successful campaign to end arson-for-profit in that neighborhood, a pattern he identified through disciplined research. The fire station built in response to that campaign remains a testament to John's first venture into grassroots organizing.

The combination of community organizing and strategic research led him to understand that the environment was also an urban issue, affecting the quality of life in low income neighborhoods as surely as in the great outdoors. He began this new work by organizing citizens to resist an ill-conceived landfill proposal and to negotiate with local factory owners to reduce emissions.

Soon, John moved on to a large national campaign, setting out to rid the country of environmental threats such as the asbestos contamination he lived next to in his hometown of Stratford, CT. At a time when environmental activism was out of fashion among some in Washington, he began traveling across the nation, speaking out against polluters, and convincing more than a million Americans to sign petitions to support toxic waste cleanup. He built his organization, The National Toxics Campaign, into a grassroots campaign to mobilize people from across the country, providing timely and passionate support for the appropriation of $8 billion for the Federal Superfund law in the mid-eighties, and helping to realize the promise of that historic legislation.

First and foremost, John was a community organizer. He took on a remarkable range of issues, and he always did so with great dedication and effectiveness. He worked with scientists to document health concerns for veterans of the Gulf War. He made the case for environmental cleanup programs from Boston Harbor to the Rio Grande. He argued against the misuse of pesticides and other chemicals in agriculture. He was a strong believer in the importance of organized labor, and he fought alongside union members for strict protections for health and safety in the workplace. He co-authored a number of books on organizing and the environment, and a book on agricultural democracy was near completion. He was also interested for many years in responsible energy policy, and he led an effort in 1998 to repeal a Massachusetts electricity deregulation law, which he felt was unfair to consumers and the environment.

For John O'Connor, environmentalism was always as much about people as about our physical surroundings. It was logical that he would turn in recent years to the cause of assuring the best possible health care for every citizen. In 1999, he led efforts that obtained more than one hundred thousand citizen signatures in support of a health reform measure for the Massachusetts ballot. Momentum generated by that successful signature drive led to the passage of important but long-delayed legislation on the rights of patients in managed care. Looking ahead, he was poised to play an important and growing role in revitalizing prospects for universal coverage in Massachusetts.

John O'Connor was also an intense and tireless champion of racial justice. He was endlessly fascinated by the diversity of human experience. As an American of Irish heritage, he led the 1997 drive to create the first permanent U.S. memorial to the victims of the Irish Famine on Cambridge Common. To John O'Connor, ethnic background and culture were intended to enrich the world, not divide it. He was proud to be known as an ''ABC''—an Armenian-by-Choice—after his marriage to Carolyn Mugar, an outstanding leader and activist in the Armenian community. John enthusiastically joined her to make his own impressive contributions to that community.

His passionately-held beliefs made John an intense and frequent critic of the status quo in general, and of politics in particular. Yet he was profoundly optimistic about what this nation could achieve. He believed deeply in democracy. He looked for inspiration to the early years of our country and the nation's founders, and he read widely about them. In his campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1998, he told voters he wanted an America that truly reflected the basic values enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution—not an America that was simply the sum of its commercial enterprises or parochial concerns. Although he did not prevail in that campaign, he ran a strong race that impressed many people and made countless new friends along the way.

With John O'Connor's death, we in Massachusetts have lost one of our state's most active and effective champions of working families, consumers, and the environment. John left us much too soon. I mourn his loss, and I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Carolyn Mugar, his daughter, Chloe, his parents, his brothers and his sister, his nieces and nephews, and his many godchildren. In his memory, we pledge to recommit ourselves to the many great causes in which John did so much to lead the way.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to pay tribute to two members of my staff who are retiring this week. These are two people who have really made a difference.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

TRIBUTE TO JOAN DOUGLASS

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, Joan Douglass is a real gem, a classy, knowledgeable woman who connects with people of all ages. She has had one of the toughest and most important jobs in our office. Joan has been on the front line. Joan is the first person you see when you come into our Columbus office. She is the person whose voice you hear when you call our Columbus office, the first person to answer the phone. That is an office that actually is not just my office. It is also Senator VOINOVICH'S office. We have, in Ohio, a joint casework office, which has worked out very well. Joan is the person there who greets everyone.

Over the years, Joan has put up with just about everything: bomb threats, sit-ins, now even anthrax scares. Joan is a rock. She is as solid as they come.

Everyone who knows Joan speaks of her with such fondness. She is really a person with no enemies. Her love, her compassion for people is unmatched. She loves people. They love her back.

You know, it takes quite a lady to take a new job at the age of 72, which is what Joan did when she came to work for us—especially the job working for two Senators. What could be tougher than that? Who in the world would ever think of doing that? Who goes from being a State legislator, which Joan was, a real estate broker, and many other exciting jobs, to working for two Senators? Only Joan.

Actually, before she worked for us she worked for then-Governor VOINOVICH for 8 years. Four of those years I was the Lieutenant Governor. Every day when I would come to work, Joan would be the first person I would see—always smiling, always happy, always professional.

Joan continues to amaze me in everything she does. I am astounded by her energy and her great sense of adventure. Nothing ever seems to slow her down.

Joan really is a terrific role model for all of us. In fact, she should be the poster child for how Federal employees should treat people. No matter what, Joan has always greeted everyone who walked into our office with great respect and great compassion. It didn't matter if it was someone who loved me or hated me. It didn't matter, Joan was steady. She treated them the right way. She treated everyone in that same sweet, nurturing, nonthreatening, and friendly way.

Joan has always handled herself with such professionalism, and no matter what, no matter how busy she was, she always has had time for people, especially for the younger people, younger members of our staff in the office. She really has been a role model. She has been a mentor. Every time I see her, Joan always asks about Fran, asks about our children and now our grandchildren. I have always appreciated that.

I speak for so many in our office and many across the State of Ohio when I

say that, although we are happy for Joan upon her retirement and we wish her nothing but the best with her new post-Senate endeavors, we are saddened by her departure and we will miss her dearly.

We will miss her dedication to the people of the State of Ohio. We will miss her optimism and her cheerful nature. We certainly will miss her terrific sense of humor. Most of all, we will just miss Joan.

She is one great lady. My wife Fran and I wish her all the best in the world.

In conclusion, I thank Joan for her dedication to the people of the State of Ohio, for her friendship, and for the work she has done for our country.

TRIBUTE TO JENNY OGLE

Mr. DeWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to good friend and member of my staff, Jenny Ogle, for all the great work she has done for the people of Ohio. Jenny, who runs the joint casework office we have with Senator VOINOVICH, is retiring today. We are going to miss her dearly.

When I started thinking about her retirement, my mind was flooded with fond memories and so many laughs and good stories. There is no one else like Jenny. Before coming to work for our joint casework office, she ran my Senate casework office worked for me when I was in the House of Representatives for 8 years, and also worked for Congressmen Bud Brown and DAVE HOBSON.

She is a true professional—someone who has been really a stabilizing force in our whole casework operation. The casework operation, of course, is what reaches out to people. It is where people of the State of Ohio go when they have a problem. They do not come to us, and they do not come to Jenny unless they are already frustrated with the Federal bureaucracy or the State bureaucracy or something else. When they come in, they already have plenty of problems. Jenny has been the one who worked out those problems.

It takes a good deal of patience to handle the kinds of things Jenny has seen over the years in that casework office. She has seen just about everything.

That is why I have always been amazed by her steadiness—her unbelievable ability to deal with the kinds of cases and the kinds of problems that are seen on a daily basis. What really impresses me is that she is always still smiling and laughing at the end of the day. She always has done her job with great professionalism and great compassion.

Jenny also has been a real leader in our office. For example, she pioneered the military academy nomination process, a very complex process. She essentially wrote the book on it. What she has developed is today being used around the country in congressional office after congressional office. She wrote the bible on how Congressmen should handle their academy nominations. I thank her for that.

I have known Jenny for a long time—since those days when she was working for Congressman Bud Brown, and when she came to work for me at our Springfield office. I remember how her Aunt Tilly used to come in the office and do her filing. I also fondly remember the doughnuts Jenny would bring in from her brother's doughnut shop. Those are great memories.

Jenny is also a rare person—a person with great compassion and empathy for people and their concerns.

Let me thank her from the bottom of my heart for the great job she has done to assist countless thousands and thousands and thousands of Ohioans over the last 20 years.

I am truly privileged to have had the extraordinary opportunity to work with Jenny and to call her my friend.

We wish her and her family all the best in the world.

In conclusion, let me thank Jenny for her dedication to the people of the State of Ohio—for her friendship, and for the work she has done for our country.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the last few weeks, many conservatives have launched an extensive public relations campaign to assail Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee, and particularly Chairman PAT LEAHY. They have been critical of the pace of judicial nominations. This campaign is wholly unwarranted. Coming during a war when Democrats are committed to working with the President to shore up our Nation's defenses, it is particularly ill timed.

The Washington Times has compared Democrats to terrorists, referring to the pending nominations as a ''hostage crisis.'' Another conservative publication, Human Events, labeled my colleague, Chairman LEAHY, as ''Osama's Enabler.''

Sadly, these outrageous charges are not limited to right-wing media outlets. Many colleagues in the Senate from the other side have leveled the following accusations: One Senator said the Democrats are guilty of racial profiling. Another Senator said the Democrats on the Judiciary Committee are actively hindering the war effort. Another Republican Senator said we are drawing out a session to deny the President a chance to make recess appointments.

In truth, Senator LEAHY has done an excellent job of moving the President's nominees along—far better than the Republicans ever did over the previous 6½ years. We have already confirmed 27 judges since July of this year. When all is said and done, we may well end up confirming more than 30. That is more judicial nominees than were confirmed during the entire first year of President Clinton's term in office, when the Senate was controlled by the same party. It is double the number of nominees confirmed during the entire first year of the first Bush administration.

Chairman LEAHY has had to contend with Senate reorganization, terrorists attacks, a massive antiterrorism bill, and anthrax contamination that shut down his personal and committee offices. We all recall the news reports about the anthrax letter being sent to Chairman LEAHY. He has had ample occasions to delay hearings. Yet he has not. He easily could have used any of these obstacles as an excuse to cancel hearings, and he did not.

In little more than 5 months, Chairman PAT LEAHY has held more judicial nomination hearings than Republicans held in all of 1996, 1997, 1999, and the year 2000.

The Democrats, under his leadership, have eliminated the anonymous holds that crippled the judicial confirmation process for the last 6 years.

If you are not here in the Senate, anonymous holds may be a term you don't understand. Let me explain it. Under Republican leadership, any Senator could block a nominee for any reason, without even identifying him or herself to the rest of the Senate. A nominee would come before the Senate Judiciary Committee and sit there week after week, month after month, and in some cases year after year without any Senator standing up and saying: I am the person who is holding this judicial nominee. It was totally unfair.

On some of the nominees, I used to go around the Chamber begging Republican Senators to tell me: Do you have a problem with the nominee? I want to talk about it.

They wouldn't say. It was anonymous. That is over. Under Senator LEAHY's leadership, the anonymous holds that have crippled this process for the last 6 years has been eliminated. We have made public a Senator's support or opposition to judicial nominees from their home State. We have moved nominees approved by the committee swiftly to the floor. I presided personally over two or three of these hearings. And those nominees went straight from the committee to the floor in a matter of days. We have voted unanimously to confirm nominees vetted by the committee. The only vote against all of President Bush's nominees coming out of committee was cast by minority leader TRENT LOTT.

Quite frankly, it is a bit ironic to hear many of our Republican colleagues complain about unfair delays in judicial nominations. It is no secret that many of our colleagues systematically blocked Democratic appointments, regardless of qualifications, to the Federal courts of appeal. In 1996, for example, the Republicans failed to confirm one single appellate court nominee—not one.