

and performance of music. Ray Charles will be deeply missed by fans and fellow musicians alike.

Ray Charles Robinson was born September 23, 1930, in Albany, GA. The child of a mechanic, Bailey Robinson, and a saw-mill worker, Aretha, Ray Charles' life was a lesson in triumph over adversity. A young Charles began losing his sight at infancy and was clinically blind by the age of 7. Two years prior his brother had accidentally drowned, and by age 15, Charles lost both parents and had no immediate family. Alone, sad, and orphaned, Ray Charles went to live with friends of his mother, nearly 200 miles away from home, in Jacksonville, FL.

Charles lived in Jacksonville for a year developing his talent as a musician before moving to Orlando, supporting himself, a 16 year-old orphan, with only his seemingly dauntless optimism to help him along. Work was sparse, and income was never guaranteed. He left Florida, looking for a new city with potential for new challenges, took what little money he had and made a five-day bus trip to Seattle, WA. It was here that Charles formed his first group, a small jazz group called the McSon Trio.

Emulating the vocal styles of his musical idol, Nat King Cole, Ray Charles formed a rhythm and blues group led by vocalist Ruth Brown. The band played night after night in smoky back-alley clubs throughout Seattle's red light district. As Charles reflected in his autobiography, these clubs consisted of little more than a big room with a band in one corner, liquor in the other, and a shoulder to shoulder audience. Playing in Seattle, Ray Charles met Quincy Jones, showing the young future producer how to write and compose music. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

It was on the West Coast that Ray Charles' famous career truly began to develop. Swingtime Records signed Charles in Seattle, giving him his first break in the music business. And in 1950, the company flew him to Los Angeles to record. In 1952 his contract was purchased by Atlantic Records, and by 1954, Charles had formed his own band recording his unique raw and tortured mix of gospel and rhythm n' blues a style that would later be known as soul music—with songs like "I Got A Woman," and the later "Georgia on my Mind," with ABC-Paramount. Ray Charles, the innovator and musical provocateur was being called "The Genius" by contemporaries and playing at such famous venues as Carnegie Hall and the Newport Jazz Festival.

In the 1960s, Ray Charles would truly come to call Los Angeles home. He had his own studio designed and built by long time friend and business manager Joe Adams, and recorded his first album, "Country and Western Meets Rhythm and Blues," at the studio in 1965. Charles would continue his recording career here for nearly 40 years until his death, and once said of the

studio, "I love this place. It's the only home I've truly had for most of my professional career, and I would never leave it." Charles would go on to produce numerous hits in his Los Angeles location, continuing an impressive career that would later earn him 12 Grammy Awards between 1960 and 1966, including best R&B recording for three consecutive years. The Ray Charles Studio was designated a Los Angeles historical landmark on April 30, 2004 thanks to the hard work of Councilman Martin Ludlow and City Council President Alex Padilla. Ray Charles made his last public appearance in Los Angeles at his studio as the site was designated a city historic landmark, a living testament to Charles' 40 years living and working in the city of Los Angeles.

The music of Ray Charles was a deep and powerful reflection of the American musical tradition. From troubled origins in the south that would characterize the blues aspect of Charles' lyrical style to the gospel influences present in so many of Charles' hits, soul music encapsulates so much of the American story. From racism, to heartache, to loneliness, to redemption, Ray Charles was writing the songs that could only come from an American artist and influencing a generation of musicians. He was at once expert composer, rock and roller, long-sufferer, genius, and poet. He was, to say the least, one of America's greatest artists, and will be deeply missed.

TRIBUTE TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY JESSE ROBERSON

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, on Tuesday, June 15, I received some very sad news, that Jessie Roberson had announced her resignation as the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at the Department of Energy effective July 15.

I have known Jessie since I was first elected to the Senate in 1996. At the time she was the site manager for the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site in my State of Colorado. Through our common interest at Rocky Flats, I got to know her quite well. She not only impressed me with her depth of knowledge but here innovation and determination in making sure that Rocky Flats would be one of the first major DOE sites to close. Under her watch from 1996 to 1999, the Rocky Flats closure date went from 2015 to 2006. I know it was her leadership that moved this ambitious plan forward.

When President Bush was elected in 2000, it was that same leadership and determination that convinced me to put her name forward knowing that she would be the best person for the job of Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at the Department. And I can say, unequivocally, that she has not disappointed.

When I met with her shortly after being confirmed, I told her that the en-

vironmental management program was broken and in need of major reforms. I added that this would not be easy and that some people would not like the changes which are necessary to make the program work. She agreed and she promised that she would work hard to effect change. While she later told me that it has not been easy, she kept the course and has transformed the program from one of just motion to true action. The Department has made tremendous progress in getting sites closer to closure. I can honestly say that what some people did not think possible 3 years ago is closer to happening; and that is that sites will be closing. I can only attribute this to the leadership of this extraordinary woman.

During her confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on May 16, I inserted into the RECORD a Denver Post editorial entitled "Roberson a Top Flight Pick" and quoted one line from the editorial. It said:

The Department's environmental management job is in fact one of the toughest positions in the Federal Government. There likely is not a better person around to tackle the task, than Jessie Roberson.

I believed that statement then, and after 3 years on the job, she proved that statement to be true.

She has done a tremendous job not just for President Bush and Secretary Abraham, but for the entire country. She has made our country safer by accelerating the cleanup of some of the world's most dangerous places. She is making sure that our children and grandchildren are not going to have to bear the burden of these contaminated sites.

While I am saddened to see her leave her post at the Department, I know that she has nothing but the brightest future ahead of her. I am proud to call her my friend and I wish Jessie and her daughter Jessica all the best. Thank you, Jessie Roberson, for your service.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF GI BILL

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the 60th anniversary of one of the most important bills to ever be passed by this body, the GI bill. Just like the recent remembrance of D-Day and the unveiling of the World War II memorial, the passage of this landmark legislation is another part of the World War II legacy.

Sixty years ago today, President Roosevelt signed into law the "Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944." That bill created unprecedented access to education and training for tens of thousands of military members returning home after World War II.

Even before the War ended, Congress and the Administration were preparing for the return of over 15 million men and women serving in the armed services. Without intervention, those 15 million would have no jobs or opportunities when they returned home. To