

TRIBUTE TO MANNY CORTEZ

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a man who has had a tremendous impact on southern Nevada, my good friend, Manny Cortez.

I haven't known Manny for years; I have known him for decades. In the 1970s, when I was in State government in Nevada, he was elected to the Clark County Commission. Since those days our paths have crossed many times. He has served on the board of governors of the University Medical Center, the Las Vegas Valley Water District, and other local agencies.

For the past 21 years, he has been the driving force behind the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority—first as a member of the board of directors, and for the last 13 years as President.

It is no exaggeration to say that Manny Cortez is one of the visionaries who made Las Vegas what it is today—the convention and entertainment capital of the world.

In 1991, the year he assumed the leadership of the Convention and Visitors Authority, we had about 21 million visitors in southern Nevada. This year we are on track to almost double that number, with more than 37 million visitors. This is due in no small part to the brilliant promotional campaigns of the Convention and Visitors Authority.

Under Manny's watch at the LVCVA, our town has seen amazing changes. When he took the helm in 1991, the first of the new mega resorts, The Mirage, had just opened a few years earlier. We had about 73,000 hotel rooms in Las Vegas.

Within the next few years we witnessed the completion of other major resorts, including the MGM Grand, Bellagio and Mandalay Bay. Today, we have 130,000 hotel rooms, along with three major convention centers.

When our Nation was attacked by terrorists on 9/11, the tourism industry took a serious hit. But Manny didn't panic, and under his steady leadership, Las Vegas bounced back.

Manny has been honored many times, by many groups. Travel Agent magazine named him as its Person of the Year in 1999, calling him "one of the most astute marketers in the tourism industry." He was recently named to the U.S. Commerce Department's Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. But I think the recognition that means the most to Manny is the Clark County Elementary School that was named in his honor in 1999.

Manny has also been a leader of the Hispanic community in Las Vegas. His prominence in the city has sent a clear message that in southern Nevada a person can go as far as their dreams and their talent will take them.

Manny has lived in Las Vegas since 1944, when I was growing up down the road in Searchlight. I feel like I have known him all my life. So it is hard to believe he turned 65 a few months ago and that he is retiring at the end of this month.

It is true, though. Manny is leaving the LVCVB, but he is leaving it in good hands. He recently said that his biggest challenge over the last few years has been to stay out of the way of the great team he has assembled, so they could do their jobs. That is the kind of attitude that has made Manny Cortez such a beloved figure in our community.

I salute my old friend on his retirement, and I look forward to our paths crossing for many more years.

THE DONALD W. REYNOLDS FOUNDATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation for its strong commitment to preserving our Nation's artistic and cultural heritage.

Three years ago, as a gift to the Nation, the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation generously made possible the acquisition of Gilbert Stuart's iconic "Lansdowne" portrait of George Washington for the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, which will reopen on July 4, 2006. In doing so, the Reynolds Foundation not only saved a national treasure but also provided a permanent home where future generations can appreciate this American masterpiece.

The Reynolds Foundation also made possible a 3-year, 8-city tour of the painting. This tour, which visited Las Vegas 2 years ago and is currently in Little Rock, has allowed millions of Americans to personally view a painting that is part of our national heritage.

By providing guides for teachers, newspapers for students, reproductions, reenactors, and history lessons about George Washington, the Foundation ensured an enriching educational experience for young people.

The exhibition of this painting at the Las Vegas Art Museum was not the first time that the generosity of the Reynolds Foundation enriched the lives of Nevadans. The Foundation has given millions of dollars to create the Donald W. Reynolds School of Journalism and Center for Advanced Media Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno, and the Donald W. Reynolds Student Services Center at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. It has also supported medical research and health and human services programs.

It is my honor to recognize the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation's many charitable actions. Please join me in thanking the foundation for its generous gift to our Nation.

CONGRATULATIONS TO STAN COLTON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Stan Colton, a man who has dedicated his life to serving the people of Nevada.

Stan hails from my hometown of Searchlight. In fact, he lives there today, on the same property that his grandfather and father owned. He runs

a little grocery store and he owns the town's original gold claim, the Duplex.

Stan has served the people of Nevada in many different capacities. He was administrative coordinator in the Clark County District Attorney's office, the Voter Registrar of Clark County, and the Nevada State Treasurer.

After he left the Treasurer's office, Stan worked with the Las Vegas—Clark County library district, where he managed the capital construction program that built 21 new libraries. He retired from that job but came out of retirement a few years ago to help the city of Henderson build a new library.

Stan has also been active in many civic groups, most recently as the President of the Henderson Rotary Club. He is stepping aside on Friday evening, and the members of the club will gather at that time to give him a good sendoff and share their stories about Stan.

Please join me in thanking Stan Colton for his service to the people of Nevada and the Henderson Rotary Club.

CINDY REID BIRTHDAY WISHES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, families are important to each of us. When you have children, one thing you wish for is that they will marry someone who will fit comfortably into your family.

My daughter-in-law Cindy is celebrating her 40th birthday. She has become such an important part of the close-knit Reid family that I can't imagine what our lives would be like if my son hadn't married her.

Cindy has been a loving and thoughtful partner to my son Rory, and a wonderful mother to my grandchildren, Ryan, Savannah and Mason.

She is an excellent teacher for her children, and a professional college teacher as well. She is a perfectionist of sorts, and when she sees a problem, she doesn't complain . . . she solves the problem.

Cindy's appreciation of literature is a goal I seek. And her opinions about food, music, movies and politics are always insightful.

One of the great blessings of having Cindy in our family has been the opportunity to become friends with her unique and wonderful mother, Helen, and her thoughtful and considerate father, Dean.

On this the celebration of two-score years, Landra and I wish Cindy a world of health and happiness, and the knowledge that she has our support and never-ending love.

ENSURING QUALITY AND ACCESS TO CANCER CARE ACT OF 2004

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to bring attention to concerns related to cancer care reimbursement.

Today, many oncology services are paid for through drug administration reimbursement because most are not

covered by Medicare. These services include specially-trained oncology nurses and supportive care services important to performing first rate cancer care. Although the new Medicare law increases reimbursements to physicians and provides much needed compensation for oncology nursing, it reduces how much Medicare will reimburse for chemotherapy beginning in 2005. While I support the sound and innovative advancements the Medicare law provides, it is important not to jeopardize cancer care through decreases in reimbursements.

Congress understood the impact the Medicare law would have on patient access and included a temporary one-year increase in physicians' practice expenses. However, this provision will expire in 2005 and could reduce access to care.

The "Ensuring Quality and Access to Cancer Care Act of 2004" would extend the one-year transitional period already established in the law for an additional year. It allows a compromise so Congress has the time it needs to further debate this issue, ask important questions regarding the impact of payment reductions and better understand how Medicare should reimburse for services provided to cancer patients.

U.S. COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today to again acknowledge the important work and contributions of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. The Ocean Commission, consisting of 16 distinguished individuals, was established by the President pursuant to the Oceans Act of 2000, legislation I sponsored to bring special attention to the problems facing our oceans and coasts, and to lead to recommendations for a new national ocean policy. The Oceans Act directed the Ocean Commission to submit a report to Congress and the President of its findings and recommendations regarding national ocean policy. Exactly one month from now, the Ocean Commission will release its final report, which reflects the deliberations, findings, and comments generated by 15 public meetings, 17 site visits, 37 State Governors and over 700 stakeholders.

The last time an oceans report of this magnitude was issued was over thirty years ago. The report of the Stratton Commission led to the creation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and passage of landmark legislation protecting our fisheries and coasts. I have read the preliminary report of this Ocean Commission, and I can tell you it is very balanced and comprehensive. The final report, when it is issued, will no doubt influence ocean policy for years to come, and has already inspired oceans legislation which my colleagues and I have introduced in the House and Senate. I am also currently developing legislation

that will set out a national vision for ocean policy, conservation, research, and education, building upon the commission's recommendations.

Reports do not write themselves, and today I am taking a moment to acknowledge the tireless efforts of Admiral James Watkins, USN (Ret.), Chairman of the Ocean Commission, the Commissioners, and their staff. Admiral Watkins deserves to be commended for leading this monumental task and generating the attention it so wisely deserves. Dr. Tom Kitsos, as Executive Director, should also be recognized for bringing a well balanced report to completion. Each of the Commissioners should be applauded for lending their valuable expertise and a considerable amount of their own time to this task: Dr. Robert Ballard, Ted Beattie, Lillian Borrone, Dr. James Coleman, Ann D'Amato, Lawrence Dickerson, Vice Admiral Paul Gaffney, USN (Ret.), Marc Hershman, Paul Kelly, Christopher Koch, Dr. Frank Muller-Karger, Edward Rasmuson, Dr. Andrew Rosenberg, William Ruckelshaus, and Dr. Paul Sandifer.

I know Admiral Watkins, Dr. Kitsos and my colleagues share my appreciation of the commission staff, who wore many hats and put in countless hours to craft a fine report. The commissioners and Dr. Kitsos obtained invaluable advice and support from Terry Schaff and editorial expertise and advice from Morgan Gopnik. At the heart of the report were the staff who lent their considerable talents to developing the major themes in each of the working groups and in actually drafting the recommendations. Laura Cantral, Aimee David, and Gerhard Kuska contributed their expertise to the discussions on governance. The stewardship working group was ably assisted by Captain Malcolm Williams, USCG (Ret.), Brooks Bowen, Angela Corridore, and Frank Lockhart. Research, education, and marine operations issues were developed with the skilled support of Ken Turgeon, Captain George White, NOAA, Roxanne Nikolaus, and Chris Blackburn.

A report of this weight depends on careful execution of a public relations strategy. Kate Naughten, Peter Hill, and Michael Kearns are to be commended for their liaison work with the government and press. And we all know that every office would not function without a solid administrative support team. Lee Benner, Macy Moy, Polin Cohanne, Sylvia Boone, Robyn Scrafford, Stacy Pickstock and Nekesha Hamilton are to be congratulated for managing the day-to-day operations of the commission.

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone on the commission for a job well done.

ABUSE OF CONTRACT FUNDS IN IRAQ

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the alarming incidence of U.S. contract funds being

abused in Iraq. These violations range from the abandonment of vehicles, each worth \$85,000, to significant project overruns involving tens of millions of tax dollars. The scope of these wasteful and fraudulent activities is both disturbing and unacceptable.

At this critical juncture in Iraq's rehabilitation, contractors and their administrators should be providing contracted services and goods with maximum efficiency.

As an American, I am proud of and thankful of the men and women who have traveled to Iraq to help restore this country. They risk their lives and, sadly, some have given their lives. However, stories of outright waste and fraud involving contract funds are deeply disturbing.

Three themes have emerged from the abuse of U.S. contracts in Iraq: task order violations, the absence of cost controls, and inconsistent oversight.

Numerous contract officers have used existing procurement or task orders to obtain services and goods beyond the scope of approved contracts. For instance, during December 2003, the Army acquired interrogators for Iraqi prisons via a contract marked for the Department of Interior information technology purchases. Interior contract officers negotiated interrogation services through an open-ended agreement laden with tenuous connections to technology. In such circumstances, new procurement items should only be obtained under open and fair competition.

The absence of consistent cost controls has also attributed to the misuse of contract funds. The General Accounting Office reports that a significant portion of task orders, associated with defense logistical support contracts in Iraq, have been granted without concrete specifications, deadlines, and prices. The prevalence of open-ended contracts have fueled inefficiency and numerous project overruns exceeding 100 percent. Unfortunately, the absence of a well-trained procurement workforce in Iraq has impeded efforts to counter these adverse outcomes.

In the presence of fragmented oversight, the misuse of contract funds has further escalated. Currently, the Coalition Provisional Authority, CPA, only has oversight of contracts associated with reconstruction and Task Order 44 of the U.S. Army's Logistical Operations Civil Acquisition Program, LOGCAP, which provides CPA logistical support, yet all other contractors in Iraq are audited by agency inspector General, IG, offices. It is anticipated that the challenges of fostering accountability will substantially increase after the handover of Iraq on June 30, 2004. The CPA IG reports that 60 days after the handover, CPA audit activities will be merged into the State Department's IG Office. This office will oversee all U.S. contracts in Iraq including those managed by the Department of Defense. Government officials forecast that this change