

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN RECOGNITION OF MARIE SWAJESKI, FOUNDER OF THE DELAWARE CHILDREN'S THEATRE

• Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I wish to rise today to recognize Marie Swajeski, founder of the Children's Repertory Theatre, now known as the Delaware Children's Theatre. Marie has dedicated her life to children and the theater. She literally has touched the lives of thousands.

Marie was born in Philadelphia, PA to the late David and Helen Mondillo. Growing up in Philadelphia, she met her husband John at a dance hall shortly before World War II. They married a few years later in 1949. The couple moved to Delaware in 1951 when John took a job at Dupont.

Marie's passion for the theater and to make people happy began at an early age. She carried this kindred spirit through adulthood and began direction of theatrical productions in the 1960s for the Ardensingers Candlelight Dinner Theatre and the Catholic Youth Organization. She became involved in both adult and children's activities, and in 1969 became chairwoman of the opera society's Junior Division, today known as the Family Opera Theatre. Marie's community theater experience involvement spans a wide variety of activities, including actor, director, choreographer, producer, and theater arts instructor.

But Marie had a dream and a desire to do more. She wanted to leave a legacy for generations to come. In 1973, she founded and became the artistic director of the Children's Repertory Theatre, now known as the Delaware Children's Theatre, DCT. Rehearsing in various basements and garages, a touring company of children and adults was formed to bring professional quality theater to schools, parks, retirement and nursing homes, hospitals, and colleges throughout Delaware.

Marie set her goals and standards high. At the time, many people thought that there would be little interest in children's theater. Marie proved them wrong. She was a true pioneer. Her strong belief that children would benefit from watching and participating in live theater carried her through this challenging period of time.

She assembled an army of enthusiasts and volunteers who shared her vision. For the next 10 years, they conducted educational workshops for children. DCT received grant money from the Delaware Arts Council in the early years to perform and tour schools throughout the State. In its first decade, DCT presented to critical acclaim over 700 performances to more than 90,000 children.

Over the years, the demand for more children's theater began to grow. The Delaware Children's Theatre needed a home. In 1984, the DCT bought the New

Century Club Building on Delaware Avenue in Wilmington. It became more than just a theater to house productions; it has become a magical second home to thousands of children.

DCT has served others as well since its inception. In the early years, the DCT offered free summer workshops for underprivileged children. DCT's outreach group, The Rainbow Players, often performs at the Ronald McDonald House, River Fest—benefiting The Boys & Girls Club—Ministry of Caring, and nursing homes.

It is through Marie's hard work and perseverance that the lives of hundreds of thousands of children have been changed. She has helped shape and enrich the lives of thousands on the stage of the theater, and in the hearts of those who have been lucky enough to call her their friend. I rise today to honor and thank Marie for her selfless dedication to the betterment of others. She truly is a remarkable woman and a testament to the community she represents. •

IN MEMORIAM OF THE REVEREND DR. BROOKS E. REYNOLDS, SR.

• Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I would like to set aside a few moments today to reflect on the life of a remarkable Delawarean, Rev. Dr. Brooks Reynolds, upon his passing at the age of 88. Dr. Reynolds was among the most remarkable men I have been privileged to know in all of the years I have lived in Delaware. Throughout his life, he demonstrated tremendous courage and integrity. He was a man with a kind heart, great abilities, and boundless energy. Unlike most people who are looking for ways to slow down when they turn 80 years old, Brooks Reynolds kept picking up the pace. In the way he lived his own life, Dr. Reynolds reminded each of us how good we can be.

The Rev. Dr. Brooks E. Reynolds, Sr., was born in Shortly, DE, on November 2, 1915, to the late John and Lida Rickards Reynolds. Upon completing high school in Georgetown in 1933, he attended Goldey College, now known as Goldey Beacom College, in Wilmington and Washington College in Chestertown, MD, before earning a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in sacred theology from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. His doctorate of divinity degree was earned at Howard University in Washington, DC.

Dr. Reynolds was lucky enough to have found love twice in his life. He married Grace Collins Reynolds in 1939 and together they served a number of churches beginning in Hooper's Island, MD, in 1938, a part of the former Wilmington Conference of the Methodist Church. Grace passed away in 1993.

His dear friend, Beatrice Simonds, was an important part of his latest ministries and they spent many happy years together before his passing. She describes him as having "personality plus." In Bea's words, "If there ever was a God on earth, he was."

In 1945, Dr. Reynolds was called to start a new church in Wilmington Manor just south of Wilmington, DE. Beginning with meetings in a private home, the church grew through two building programs and the renaming to Asbury United Methodist Church. It had a membership of 2300 when Dr. Reynolds was reassigned to Bethesda United Methodist Church in Salisbury, MD, in 1974.

Dr. Reynolds first retired in 1986 but returned to active ministry to serve three additional pastorates, most recently Christ United Methodist Church in Laurel from 1999 to 2001, where I was once privileged to speak as a lay person while Governor of Delaware. In 1954, he became the first chaplain of the Delaware State Police and in 2003 was awarded the first Delaware State Police emeritus status with promotion to major. Dr. Reynolds also served as the chaplain for the Delaware State Hospital.

Other significant past affiliations included the chaplaincy of Governor Bacon Health Center in Delaware City, secretary of the board of evangelism and president of the board of trustees of the Peninsula Conference Board of Hospital and Homes, and president of the trustees of the Manor House in Seaford. He was a 32nd degree Mason and Past Grand Chaplain of the Masonic Lodge of Delaware.

Dr. Reynolds will always be remembered by me and by the tens of thousands of people whose lives he touched and enriched as a kind and compassionate man who loved all people. He saw no distinction between color, gender, race, or creed. He was a visionary in every sense of the word. Life was about growth, and he was always trying to find new ways to reach out to people. When the church had no money, Dr. Reynolds bought a bus to transport people to church who otherwise had no way of coming to church. The bus transported parishioners, children to Sunday school, and to day care. Some 300 children rode his buses. The church's fleet of buses expanded to include 27 buses.

Dr. Reynolds had a great sense of humor and was known for telling fabulous stories. One of my favorite all-time quotations came from him, too. "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." He often injected humor into his sermons and had a quick wit. He was a genuine person, and was not just comfortable to be around; he was a joy to be around.

Dr. Reynolds is survived by his sons, Brooks E. Reynolds, Jr., of Topeka, KS, and State Representative Bruce C. Reynolds and his wife, Kathleen, of Bear, DE, as well as by seven grandchildren, Ty, Lyda, Blair, Bret and Chad Reynolds, Mary Bock, and Brian Seals, and one great-granddaughter, Tara Leek.

I rise today to commemorate Dr. Reynolds, to celebrate his life, and to offer his family my support. Dr. Reynolds embodied the best of Delaware, and he will be sorely missed by us all. •