

I have known John for over 30 years, and he has always been one of the people I have admired most in the world. I have consistently been impressed by his insights, his commitment to peace, and his dedication to the people of Northern Ireland. He is truly a profile in courage, and he won the Nobel Prize for it in 1998.

I first contacted John in 1972, shortly after he founded the Social Democratic and Labour Party in Northern Ireland. I was planning a trip to Western Europe for a NATO meeting in Bonn. I was concerned about the violence erupting in Northern Ireland, and I was told that John Hume was the best person to see in the North. So I called him in Derry, and said: "Mr. Hume, it's Ted Kennedy. I understand you're the person to talk to about what's going on over there." He didn't believe it. He said: "Pull my other leg."

I resisted though and told him that I would be in Bonn for the meeting of NATO. He graciously agreed to meet me there, and it was the beginning of our extraordinary friendship over the years.

John has been an indispensable voice for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. His call for respect for both the Catholic and the Protestant traditions has been eloquent and historic for more than three decades.

In a very real sense, it was John who, in large part, became the glue that held Northern Ireland together, halted the descent into anarchy and civil war, and produced realistic hope for peace and further progress.

In 1983, largely as a result of John's efforts, the principal political parties in Ireland and the SDLP in Northern Ireland established what was called the New Ireland Forum. It developed new ideas for peace, and prepared a landmark report that laid the groundwork for an unprecedented, new initiative on the North between Britain and Ireland, culminating in 1985 with the signing of the historic Anglo-Irish Agreement by Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain and Garret FitzGerald of Ireland.

That in turn led to the cease-fire by the Irish Republican Army in 1994, the famous Good Friday Agreement in 1998, and the further progress that has brought both sides so close to a permanent peace today.

John has been a familiar face to many of us in the United States over the years. Perhaps his greatest achievement was educating Irish America about the conflict and the most effective way forward.

The civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960s planted the seed for a comparable movement by the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland. But, as the movement gained strength, it encountered intense resistance, and there was a very real feeling that violence was the only path to a better future. Much of Irish America agreed with that view, and there was a strong financial support in the United States for the IRA.

John Hume changed all that. He became an apostle of nonviolence, just as

Martin Luther King did at a critical time in our own civil rights movement. The violence began to ebb, and more and more citizens in Northern Ireland recognized that peaceful change could be achieved in a way that would benefit people of both communities in the North. Others had important roles as well, but at a critical time in the history of Northern Ireland, John Hume stepped up and led the way toward peace, and history will honor him forever for all he did so well.

The pending resolution pays tribute to John Hume's brilliant achievements in the cause of peace for all the people of Northern Ireland, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### HONORING THE CAREER OF DENNIS HAGNY

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to publicly commend Mr. Dennis Hagny, general manager and chief executive officer of Northern Electric Cooperative, for devoting more than 40 years of service to advancing the ambitions and objectives of the rural electric program. After four decades with Northern Electric, Dennis is retiring and looks forward to traveling with his wife, Mary, and visiting their two children, Jennifer and Jeff.

Over the years, Dennis guided Northern Electric as it grew from a basic electric service provider into a progressive electric system that currently serves more than 6,000 residential, farm and industrial customers. Under Dennis' leadership, Northern Electric headed up many projects designed to technologically integrate South Dakota, such as the North Central Area Interconnect, which Northern Electric built and funded. North Central Area Interconnect, created in 1993, is a fully-interactive long distance learning system comprised of eight school districts, spanning three separate counties. This system provides high school students the opportunity to take college level classes via personal computer. Likewise, Dennis' innovation and commitment to rural communities inspired the creation of Northern Rural Cable TV, the Nation's first rural cooperative wireless cable television system.

Dennis has used Northern Electric to connect South Dakotans not only with each other, but with the global market, as well. During Dennis' tenure, Northern Electric developed WOWNet, a high speed, wireless internet service for underserved areas. Similarly, Dennis helped finance the construction of Aberdeen's first "smart park," a 150-acre industrial park wired for high-speed telecommunications.

In addition to his tremendous contributions to rural South Dakota, Dennis, a native of Gettysburg, SD, is also a Vietnam veteran. Following his graduation from Gettysburg High School in 1961, Dennis served in the U.S. Army and Iowa National Guard from 1965 to 1969.

Dennis has always been devoted to improving conditions in the communities he served. As a result, he is a founding member of the Rural Electric Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund, REED, and is actively involved with numerous local boards and organizations. REED, a nonprofit corporation that provides financing for projects in small communities and rural areas of South Dakota, is credited with creating more than 3,000 jobs throughout South Dakota. Additionally, Dennis is chairman of Avera St. Luke's Board of Directors, and is a member of St. Luke's Foundation Board. Also, he serves on the Northern Electric Regional Board of the Governors Office of Economic Development, the Presentation College Board of Trustees, and is founding and past member of South Dakota Rural Enterprise. He is also a life member of Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion.

It is with great honor that I share Dennis' accomplishments with my colleagues and publicly commend him for his excellent service to South Dakota. I wish him the very best, along with his wife, Mary; their two children, Jennifer and Jeff; and their three grandchildren.●

##### SOUTH DAKOTAN STUDENTS HONORED

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I congratulate and honor two young South Dakota students who have achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in their communities. Michelle Rydell of Vermillion and Molly Stehly of Sioux Falls have just been named State Honorees in the 2005 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. They have proved themselves to be a part of the extraordinary youth of our country who understand the importance of civic duty and service in the community.

Michelle is being recognized for her creation of a "Dream Team" that collected essential goods for impoverished people in Guatemala and helped raise awareness of poverty in the region. She gave more than goods to the people of a foreign land, she gave them hope.

Molly is being recognized for her help with her mother's special education class. She offered freely of herself, at the young age of 13, in an effort to help the students with special needs to move toward greater independence.

In a State like South Dakota, selfless acts of goodwill toward the community are often commonplace. Michelle and Molly stand out, however, for their constant contributions to others without consideration for themselves. The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program has considered more than 20,000 young people this year and Michelle and Molly are among the handful selected for the honor.

I heartily applaud Michelle and Molly for their initiative in seeking to