

rheumatology. Yet Dr. Cassidy has done more than just teach, write, and research. Through his efforts, the Missouri Department of Health established the Juvenile Arthritis Care Coordination Program in 1993 to help families obtain family-centered, community-based, coordinated care for children diagnosed with juvenile arthritis. His efforts did not stop there.

Realizing that there were children in Southern Missouri who were too poor or too sick to travel to Columbia to receive treatment, Dr. Cassidy and his wife Nan would get in their car every other week and drive to a small clinic in Springfield, MO, and see as many as 25 young children suffering from juvenile arthritis. It didn't matter that they couldn't pay, Dr. Cassidy insisted on finding a way to get the children the treatments they needed. As one doctor said, "Dr. Cassidy will go to any length to help a child."

Dr. Cassidy's support extended to his patients' families as well. "He is an incredibly compassionate physician," said one mother, "who ensures that each family understands how juvenile arthritis affects their child and what parents can do to help their child lead normal and healthy lives." Dr. Cassidy was instrumental in building a community of support across Missouri and the United States for families living with juvenile arthritis. In 1980, it was through the encouragement and support of Dr. Cassidy that a mother of one of his patients and two other mothers from other States formed the American Juvenile Arthritis Organization, AJAO, which eventually became a council of the Arthritis Foundation.

Dr. Cassidy was instrumental in organizing the first juvenile arthritis educational conference for parents, children, and health professionals held in 1983 which became an annual national conference. He felt education for families of children with arthritis was critical to their care and helped coordinate many Missouri regional conferences in St. Joseph, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Columbia.

Perhaps the best measure of Dr. Cassidy's legacy as a doctor comes from the praise and admiration of his patients. Twelve years ago, Dr. Cassidy began treating two young sisters who suffered debilitating pain from juvenile arthritis. Throughout the years he persistently encouraged them, to their chagrin, to wear braces and take their medicine. Recently, Dr. Cassidy received a letter from the girls. They are starting college as healthy, happy, young women—a circumstance virtually unthinkable when Dr. Cassidy began his career. They thanked him for supporting them and giving them the opportunity to live life as they never thought they could.

Dr. Cassidy has led an extraordinary life in which he has practiced, researched, and guided aspiring doctors for almost 50 years. He has improved the understanding and awareness of pediatric rheumatology and changed the

lives of thousands of children. On behalf of the children and families in Missouri and across the country, is my pleasure and honor to commemorate the distinguished career of Dr. Cassidy, a true pioneer in the field of pediatric rheumatology. ●

HONORING CHARITIES FOR THE BLIND

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Charities for the Blind, a nonprofit organization in southern California. This organization continues to make a positive impact on the lives of individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Charities for the Blind is an organization that provides computer adaptive technology and training to blind and visually impaired individuals. The men and women who volunteer their time and energy to this organization provide an important service to the people of Southern California and our Nation.

Charities for the Blind was created by Craig Schneider in 2000 after he suffered a complete loss of his vision. Craig Schneider is a general building contractor who became blind after complications from radiation treatments and exposure to radon gas. He found it difficult to adapt to a visually impaired lifestyle. He took computer courses with the assistance of computer adaptive technology but found them difficult and frustrating. Other students were similarly frustrated, and when some began to drop out of classes, he knew that he was not alone. After seeking assistance from State rehabilitation authorities and blind charities, Craig Schneider recognized that there is an important need among the visually impaired that needed to be met.

According to the National Federation of the Blind, 70 percent of individuals who live with blindness or a visual impairment are unemployed. This overwhelming number of individuals have the potential to live highly productive lives and gain meaningful employment. Charities for the Blind recognizes this need and works to assist individuals with blindness and visual impairment, providing them with tools they need to overcome their disability.

In addition to providing training, counseling, and computer adaptive equipment to the visually impaired and blind, Charities for the Blind also employs blind individuals directly. Craig Schneider has five employees who work with him who are also blind, who help make Charities for the Blind possible. Craig Schneider funds the organization from his private business, which allows him to pay for computers and equipment, employees and technicians, and travel to and from people's homes to help train them in the use of adaptive equipment.

In its first year, Charities for the Blind gave away 12 computers. Today, the organization provides roughly 30

computers each month, with a short yet successful history of meeting needs in the blind and visually impaired community for individuals between the ages of 10 and 96. Those who have received counseling and equipment from Charities for the Blind have gained new levels of independence, and more and more blind and visually impaired individuals are being empowered and employed each day.

Today I salute the dedication and service of Charities for the Blind. This organization has recognized a tremendous need and works daily to help empower our Nation's blind and visually impaired. I applaud the work and commitment Charities for the Blind has made in bettering the lives of many. ●

TRIBUTE TO EDGAR WAYBURN

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that today I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting the incomparable Dr. Edgar Wayburn on his 100th birthday. To Californians and others across the United States, Ed Wayburn is a living legacy and an environmental hero.

Ed Wayburn was born on September 17, 1906, in Macon, GA. He attended Harvard Medical School and moved to San Francisco in 1933 to start his medical practice. He found northern California's natural beauty intoxicating and refers to the Sierra Nevada and Yosemite National Park as his "first wilderness love."

Within 6 years of moving to California, Ed joined the Sierra Club. And over the next 50 years, his love and passion for nature and conservation grew. He served five terms as the Sierra Club's elected president.

Ed shared this love of nature with his wife Peggy Wayburn. Together they traveled throughout Alaska and fought to protect natural areas in California and the West for over 50 years.

More than 100 million acres of natural beauty throughout California and Alaska have been protected today thanks to Ed's hard work, including northern California's Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore and Alaska's Denali and Glacier Bay National Parks.

Dr. Wayburn is credited with saving more wilderness than any other person alive today.

I always say that one of my proudest honors is the Edgar Wayburn Award presented to me by the Sierra Club. It is a frequent reminder of the work Ed and I have done together. It is also a reminder of the important work which still remains to protect and preserve our natural surroundings.

Without Ed's efforts over the past decades, I would not want to imagine what the American landscape would look like today. Ed's leadership and perseverance have ensured the preservation of precious open space and wild areas for generations to come. His work will continue to be an inspiration

to countless environmental advocates and others working to effect change. His work is certainly an inspiration to me.

I extend my most heartfelt wishes to Ed Wayburn for a very happy 100th birthday. Thank you, Ed, for all you have done for the protection of our natural environment.●

TRIBUTE TO NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

● Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I wish to commend the National Weather Service and the Billings, MT office.

This year Billings, MT, hosted the 13th national signature event commemorating the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Exploration. The event at Pompeys Pillar was one of the most successful signature events in the country, and I was proud to participate in the opening ceremonies.

A great deal of preparation and partnership went into the planning surrounding those 4 days in July and the thousands of visitors expected to attend. Federal agencies stepped up to the table. Federal partnerships were key to this success. Specific concern centered on area wildfires already burning that had been started by lightning strikes from afternoon and evening storms. The National Weather Service took on major responsibility for these weather-related public safety issues.

On Saturday, July 22 and Sunday, July 23, late afternoon storms accompanied by upwards of 60-mph winds necessitated rapid evacuations of the public events at Pompeys Pillar. Efficient communication and clear direction from the National Weather Service, in coordination with the Bureau of Land Management, provided safe passage out of Pompeys Pillar in a swift and orderly fashion for the remaining public visitors, volunteers, and employees on those days.

It is apparent that the storm's effect and damage could have easily become a larger story attributed to the Pompeys Pillar signature event. That it was not is a testament to the science, technology, and public service and dedication of your agency and of your employees. Thanks to all of you for what you do for Montana. It is a job well done.●

CONGRATULATIONS TO SERGEANT LEIGH ANN HESTER

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I would like to recognize and congratulate U.S. Army SGT Leigh Ann Hester, a recent recipient of the United Service Organization's 'Service Member of the Year' Award. This honor is presented annually to one enlisted member from each branch of the Armed Forces and must be given to a soldier who demonstrates remarkable courage and skill, often risking their own lives to save the lives of others.

On March 20, 2005, Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester of the 617th Military Police Company, a National Guard unit out of Richmond, KY, was escorting a convoy of 26 supply vehicles when they were suddenly ambushed. According to military accounts of the firefight, about 40 insurgents attacked the convoy as it was traveling south of Baghdad, launching their assault from trenches alongside the road using rifles, machine guns, and rocketpropelled grenades. Despite being outnumbered five to one and coming under heavy enemy fire, Sergeant Hester led her team through the 'kill zone' and into a flanking position, where she assaulted a trench line with grenades and M203 grenade-launcher rounds.

Her quick thinking saved the lives of numerous convoy members. When the conflict ended, 27 insurgents were dead, 6 were wounded, and 1 was captured.

SGT Leigh Ann Hester is the first woman to receive the USO 'Service Member of the Year' Award and the first woman in over 60 years to receive the Silver Star—the Army's third highest award for valor in combat.

SGT Hester was only 23 years old at the time of this encounter. She was born in 1982 in Bowling Green, KY, later moved to Nashville, TN, and she joined the National Guard in April of 2001. As she continues the legacy of military service in her family—her uncle, Carl Sollinger, served honorably in Vietnam, and her grandfather, Oran Sollinger, was awarded a Bronze Star for his valor in World War II—Sergeant Hester intends to continue to serve our country by beginning a career in law enforcement.

On behalf of the people of Kentucky and the Senate, I thank SGT Leigh Ann Hester for her commitment to her country, community, and fellow soldiers. It is my honor to recognize her today for her bravery and her accomplishments. My thoughts and prayers are always with her and all the men and women who protect this Nation.●

RECOGNIZING SOUTH CAROLINA ORGANIZATIONS

● Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, today I wish to call attention to the good work of the Columbia, SC, Urban League and the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA. On September 11, 2006, the Columbia Urban League and the VA cohosted a training seminar for church leaders in South Carolina to help address the growing population of troubled military veterans returning from combat zones. This Veterans Ministry Workshop was led by a panel of 10 physicians from the Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia, each of whom explained the various psychological challenges that face veterans returning from conflict. The panelists discussed methods for dealing with veterans' children and spouses while offering practical tips for church members to follow. Around 100 church leaders attended the event.

I salute the VA, the Columbia Urban League, and in particular its president,

Mr. James T. McLawhorn, for their initiative in organizing the Veterans Ministry Workshop. It was Mr. McLawhorn, a member of the VA Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs, who originally proposed the idea in response to studies released by the Journal of the American Medical Association, JAMA. Without his leadership and the cooperation of VA officials on the ground in South Carolina, the Veterans Ministry Workshop may have never happened. I am confident that the workshop will have a tremendous impact on the veteran community in South Carolina, and I hope that the Columbia Urban League and VA will build on its success.●

WHITE LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that today I publicly honor and congratulate White Lake School District on achieving blue ribbon status under the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. The prestigious blue ribbon designation is based on strong test scores and a myriad of other successes.

The White Lake School District is among only 250 entities to be recognized nationwide so far this year. For public schools like White Lake to qualify for blue ribbon status, they must meet State testing levels or have a student body comprised of a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, yet demonstrate improvement. Achieving this goal is a wonderful accomplishment, and White Lake schools ought to be applauded.

This is not the first time White Lake schools have been honored. In both the 2003–2004 and 2004–2005 school years, the district was named a Distinguished District, due to high scores on the DakotaSTEP achievement test. The U.S. Department of Education has also named White Lake as a Title I Distinguished School. In order to apply to be a blue ribbon school, the White Lake School District submitted a 27-page application outlining their strategies and techniques for learning success.

Mr. President, I am proud to have this opportunity to honor White Lake School District. It is a privilege for me to share with my colleagues the exemplary leadership and tireless commitment to education that White Lake School District provides to its students. I strongly commend the hard work and dedication that the faculty, administrators, and staff devote to White Lake schools, and I am very pleased that their hard work and the students' substantial efforts are being publicly honored and celebrated. On behalf of all South Dakotans, I would like to congratulate this extraordinary school system and wish them continued success.●

TRIBUTE TO BETTY J. MARTIN

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to honor