

Mary Burks did not simply sit and dream. She led a 6-year campaign in the early 1970s to designate the Sipsey Wilderness area in the Bankhead National Forest as wilderness. In doing so, she won the support of the entire Alabama congressional delegation.

That is not always an easy thing to do.

After the campaign, not only was the Sipsey Wilderness created, but the Eastern Wilderness Area System was established when President Gerald Ford signed the Eastern Wilderness Act. It is fair to assume that this success would not have been achieved without Mary Burks' tireless efforts.

Today, Alabama is home to more than 41,000 acres of wilderness, including the Cheaha and Dugger Mountain Wilderness Areas. As you know, hundreds of thousands of acres have now been designated as wilderness in the Eastern United States.

All of these accomplishments have roots in Mary Burks's original push to preserve wilderness in Alabama.

Describing the importance of Mary's efforts and the organization that she founded, the Alabama Conservancy, Floyd Haskell, former U.S. Senator from Colorado, stated "If not for the Alabama Conservancy, there would be no concept of Eastern Wilderness."

There is a difference between thinking that things ought to be a certain way, and actually making them so. Too often we are quick to do the former, and slow to do the latter. But the protected resources in my home State and others are larger in size, great in quantity, and more secure in their protection because Mary Burks fought for them all her life. She left a lasting legacy in Alabama that will forever be felt by all who care about wilderness and natural places.●

AMERICAN HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION

● Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, AHEPA, on their 85th anniversary this year. Since 1922, AHEPA has diligently served the Hellenic community and all Americans through a variety of programs and outreach endeavors.

Initially created to combat discrimination and hate, AHEPA's mission has expanded during its distinguished history. As the largest and oldest American-based, Greek heritage grassroots membership organization, AHEPA works to promote the Greek ideals of philanthropy, education, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence within the community. Such principles can be appreciated by people of all backgrounds, and I commend AHEPA for inspiring and supporting generations of Americans.

AHEPA's work has touched people from all walks of life. The organization raised funds for U.S. war bonds during

World War II, and currently contributes more than \$2,000,000 each year to educational, medical, and other philanthropic causes. AHEPA's positive contributions stem from both the organization and the outstanding people involved. Members of AHEPA have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and have held positions in local, State, and Federal Government throughout the years.

As we honor AHEPA's many successes, we also celebrate the contributions of the more than 1 million Greek-Americans in this country, some 61,000 of whom live in my home State of New Jersey. The Hellenic community in America contributes daily to the economic, political and cultural fabric of this Nation, and the United States shares a close relationship with Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. I look forward to working with my colleagues and AHEPA to strengthen America's relationship with our Hellenic friends.

I commend AHEPA's commitment to serving the United States and the Hellenic community. I congratulate them on their 85 years of advocacy, and I look forward to their bright future.●

RECOGNIZING T. DENNY SANFORD

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize T. Denny Sanford for his generosity recently represented by the gift of \$400 million to Sioux Valley Hospitals and Health System. This gift is the second largest donation to any medical institution since 2001 and will help Sioux Valley transform itself into a world-class research institution. In recognition of the donation and in honor of Mr. Sanford, the health care system has been renamed Sanford Health.

Since his birth in St. Paul, MN, in 1935, T. Denny Sanford has reached many outstanding milestones that deserve recognition and praise. After starting work at age 8 in his father's clothing distribution company, he spent most of his teen years selling his father's clothing to retail stores. He later graduated with a degree in psychology from the University of Minnesota and was recruited for a sales and marketing management position with Armstrong Cork Company.

In the 1960s, Mr. Sanford established a manufacturers' representative company and a regional distribution company. Then in 1971, he bought Contech, a specialty chemical company, from Sears & Roebuck and took it public the following year. After selling Contech in the 1980s, he created a venture capital fund to provide financing to young entrepreneurs. Out of the 28 companies he has financed, 18 have become public corporations.

In 1986, Mr. Sanford purchased United National Bank in Sioux Falls, SD. The bank, now named First Premier Bank, has expanded throughout South Dakota and includes Premier Bankcard Inc., which is a national leader in the credit card industry.

Although Mr. Sanford is well-known for his business achievements, he is even more distinguished for his philanthropy. He has donated millions to organizations that are close to his heart and even started the Sanford Foundation for charitable giving. In 2005, he gave over \$70.5 million to charitable causes in the United States and ranked 14th on the Chronicle of Philanthropy's list of America's most-generous donors. Additionally, in 2006, he was named to the Business Week Top 50 list of most-generous philanthropists in the United States.

Before his most recent donation, Mr. Sanford had contributed \$20 million to Sioux Valley for expansion with South Dakota's medical school and \$16 million for Sanford Children's Hospital, which plans to open in 2009. This recent gift of \$400 million will be used to achieve four major goals. These goals are to build 5 pediatric clinics around the country, to expand research, to build a health care campus with over 20 separate facilities, and to specialize in a specific line of medical research that will result in a cure.

T. Denny Sanford's generous gift to Sioux Valley will encourage prosperity and growth for South Dakota by generating an estimated 9,200 new jobs, adding approximately \$1.2 billion to the economy, drawing patients from around the world, and improving the wellness of our citizens. This donation will reach people from across the country and make South Dakota a leader and magnet in medical research.

T. Denny Sanford is a giving man with a passion for making a difference in the lives around him. He is even known to have a goal to "die broke." Because of his profound generosity and desire to help others, T. Denny Sanford's influence will be evident for many generations to come.

On behalf of the State of South Dakota, I am honored to rise and say: Thank you, Denny. Your significant gift will have a lasting influence not only on the people of South Dakota but on people throughout the world that will be affected by your selfless generosity.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)