

As we celebrate Women's History Month, the courageous acts of the American heroines of 1913 should inspire us all to work to eliminate the gender inequalities that still exist in our society today. I join all Americans in celebrating the countless contributions of women to our Nation's history and culture and in working towards a more just and fair society for future generations of American women and girls.

REMEMBERING LORI ACTON

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, it is with deep regret and grief that I inform my fellow senators of the passing of my personal friend, Lori Acton. Mrs. Acton was a dynamic and dedicated woman whose absence in the community of Laurel County will be immediately and acutely felt.

Lori is someone who cannot be replaced. As the executive director of the Laurel County Public Library, she was a passionate leader who was visionary without being reckless, infectiously funny without being frivolous, direct and driven without being rude or mean-spirited, and a tireless worker who fully enjoyed the life and work she participated in. Her work with the library spanned nearly three decades, but the impact of her influence and passion cannot be measured by the usual metrics. Indeed, as one local writer noted, "what people like Lori mean to a community cannot be seen by those who do not know her." She revolutionized the library system through hiring a stellar staff, instituting new, creative, and interesting programs, and constantly improving every issue she addressed.

Lori made an impact on people's lives. Not only did the library benefit from her enthusiastic approach to fostering a love of reading and learning, but her very presence and constant smile became signatures of her community. Countless testimonies from those who knew her speak to what an incredible impact she had as both a librarian and a friend.

At this time, I ask that we join together with the community of Laurel County, KY, in mourning the loss of my friend Mrs. Lori Acton. I believe that others can aspire to emulate Lori's character, enthusiasm, love and involvement with the community she lived in.

I also ask unanimous consent that an article lauding Lori from the Laurel County-area publication the Sentinel Echo appear in today's RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Sentinel Echo, January 30, 2013]
LAUREL LIBRARY DIRECTOR DIES MONDAY
(By Jeff Noble)

CORBIN.—For more than a quarter-century, Lori Acton gave people of all ages a window to the world and beyond by opening the doors to them at the Laurel County Public Library.

On Wednesday, her colleagues and friends remembered Acton as a passionate advocate for inspiring others through the library's staff, service, and outreach programs.

Acton, the library's district director since 1985, died Monday at her home in London. She was 57.

"The library was more than a job to Lori—it was her passion, and she worked tirelessly to make the library a place everyone could come and enjoy and learn. From babies to seniors, she wanted this library to offer whatever it could to enrich their lives and the community. We plan on working our hardest to make sure that Lori's vision to the future continues," the library's deputy director, Peggy Mershon, said Wednesday.

Another who knew Acton said she was the driving force in moving the library from its 4th Street location to its present home on College Park Drive in London, which opened in 2003.

"Her visionary leadership, enthusiasm, and energy have been pivotal in creating a model of what a library can become in the 21st century," said R. W. Dyche III, president of the Laurel County Public Library's Board of Trustees.

In a phone interview Wednesday, Dyche said two traits made Acton stand out above the crowd.

"Number one, she was full of enthusiasm. Lori pursued all goals with enthusiasm. It was her determination that led directly to the opening of the new library. Second, she had a lot of strengths. One of them was she was not afraid to hire extremely talented people to work for her. She'll be remembered as a very happy person, so pleased to help people in Laurel and surrounding areas with their educational needs."

To honor her memory, the main library and their branches in Corbin and North London were closed Tuesday.

A picture of Acton, along with the dates of her birth and death in white letters over a black background, was posted on the home page of the library's website.

Kathryn Hardman was one of Acton's closest friends. Together the two worked on improving literacy in the county, and also were active in community activities as members of the London Rotary Club.

She said in a phone interview Wednesday the news of Acton's passing was still echoing over London and Laurel County.

"We're all pretty shocked. It's incomprehensible. She had a lot of friends in the community. She's been a vital part of our community for 28 years. The community mourns this loss," noted Hardman, who is the executive director of Laurel County Adult Education.

Hardman pointed out that because of Acton's direction, the library spearheaded the creation of the program in 1986 to promote adult literacy. Acton was also on the board of directors of the Saint Joseph London Foundation.

There were other roles in Acton's life. Hardman added, "Her most significant role was as mother, wife, daughter, sister, and friend."

"We've been having lunch for 25 years. We talked about our careers, our community, our nation, our families, and of course, politics. We both loved to talk about politics. It would be fair to say we both had strong opinions."

Acton's role as a Rotary member was extensive. At the time of her passing, she was looking forward to working on the annual Rotary International Dinner, a project Acton had headed for the past five years, and is sponsored by both the London and Corbin Rotary Clubs.

That passion Acton had with the library extended to her planning the dinner and to

helping worthy causes, said Corbin Rotary Club member the Rev. John Burkhardt.

"Lori had a lot of energy, high spirits, and she laughed a lot. She was very polite, sociable, and was an extraordinary Rotarian. She was lively, she'd ask a lot of questions to the speakers, and was very actively involved. Lori wasn't a wallflower."

Just before noon Wednesday, this message was posted on the library's Facebook page:

"Lori Acton had an unwavering passion for this library, always striving to give her community what she felt was needed and deserved. Her enthusiasm, leadership and commitment will be missed by all of us. Please remember her family and friends in your thoughts and prayers."

Several who knew Acton responded in kind. One person wrote, "Lori was a wonderful librarian and inspired me to become a librarian. I will miss seeing her on my visits home."

Another said, "I smile (through) my tears when I think of Lori. She just ALWAYS had a smile and a laugh when you saw her. Always making you feel real special. How I loved her passion for life."

Lori Holzworth Acton was a native of Sterling, Colorado, located northeast of Denver near the Wyoming border. She is survived by her husband and four children. Her mother, two sisters, and a brother also survive. Visitation is at 11 a.m. Saturday at House-Rawlings Funeral Home in London, with funeral services Saturday at 1 p.m. in the funeral home's chapel with the Rev. Wade Arp officiating. Burial will follow at A.R. Dyche Memorial Cemetery in London, with House-Rawlings Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

REMEMBERING JACK SIZEMORE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I rise today to reflect on the loss of Mr. Jack Sizemore, an exemplary citizen of Kentucky and a genuinely good man. Mr. Sizemore, of Laurel County, was laid to rest on February 12, 2013, and is survived by his wife, 7 children, 20 grand-children, 16 great-grandchildren, and two sisters.

The words, "let me tell you what Jack Sizemore did for me" are commonly heard in Jack's beloved town of London, and represent just how sorely his presence will be missed. His legacy of goodwill is firmly established after years working in the Laurel County Detention Center, as he chose to build a reputation as a jailer who "liked the job he was doing and [who] took care of the prisoners in a humane way and with the utmost courtesy." This testimony comes from his former supervisor Edd Parsley, who admits that "you don't find many men like that."

Jack was known to always have people laughing, and the community he loved so much has looked back and seen all the ways he touched their lives. The health problems that plagued his final years cannot begin to take attention away from his legacy and reputation.

At this time, I ask that my colleagues in this United States Senate join me in honoring Mr. Jack Sizemore. Along with our condolences to his friends and family, we simultaneously offer our gratitude and praise of this truly wonderful man.