

America whose commitment to their community, their State, and their Nation has proved invaluable to society. I know Kentuckians are proud this March to honor the more than 2.2 million women who live in the Commonwealth.

Women's History Month began as a national celebration in 1981 thanks to an act of Congress, and since 1995 every President has issued an annual proclamation designating March as Women's History Month. For Women's History Month 2013, I would like to shine the spotlight on some very admirable women's groups in Kentucky who are working hard to make the Bluegrass State a better place for women to live, grow, and prosper—and making history themselves.

The Family Scholar House in Louisville is an organization that strives to end the cycle of poverty for many women by giving students who are single parents the support they need to earn a 4-year college degree. By working from poverty to self-sufficiency, these parent-students are then able to provide their children with a better life. The Family Scholar House is transforming families and communities through the power of education, and I had the pleasure of meeting with some of this organization's leaders in my Capitol office last week.

The Chrysalis House, in Lexington, provides substance-abuse treatment programs for women. Their mission is to support women and their families in recovery from alcohol and drugs. In operation for over 34 years, Chrysalis House specializes in treating substance-dependent expecting mothers, allowing them to keep their newborn babies with them while in treatment. They also counsel the children of these women on substance abuse prevention. Chrysalis uses a combination of the 12-step program, long-term living arrangements, and a caring and nurturing environment to ensure women and their families live fulfilling lives free of abusive substances. I have visited Chrysalis House and seen firsthand how much good they are doing, and I want to especially recognize president Lindy Karns and her husband, Rick Christman, for their dedicated efforts.

The Hope Center, also located in Lexington, is an organization that addresses homelessness on multiple fronts. They provide food, shelter, and clothing to the homeless; recovery for those who are addicted; health services for the mentally ill; employment services for those looking for work; housing for those who need it; and childcare and higher education opportunities for single-parent families. The Hope Center seeks to identify the underlying causes that compel people to seek out their services and then work to address them in fundamental ways.

The Isaiah House, located in the town of Willisburg in Washington County, seeks to provide real hope for those who suffer from addiction. This

faith-based program helps men but also has special facilities and programs for women. They exist to help provide women struggling with drug or alcohol addiction the peace and serenity they have been searching for, through counseling that tends to the spiritual, mental, and physical needs of the residents.

Then we have the Western Kentucky University Sisterhood. Western Kentucky University, located in Bowling Green, is one of the Commonwealth's leading universities, and with women making up 65 percent of the school's current students and half of all alumni, the WKU Sisterhood is a way for women to make an impact at the university. The WKU Sisterhood is a group of women who donate at least \$1,000 each and then decide collectively how that money shall be used. Two grant recipients, the groups Women in Transition and Project CLASS, are both programs specifically geared to help women succeed in college.

The New Opportunity School for Women, located in the town of Berea, was founded to improve the educational, financial, and personal circumstances of low-income, middle-aged women in the Appalachian region of Kentucky. In the past 23 years, the New Opportunity School for Women has hosted more than 580 women in its 3-week residential program and provided hundreds more with career and educational outreach and counseling.

What a marvel it is to consider all of the resources, programs, and charities that have been founded in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, by women, for women, to empower women to improve their own lives and then, in turn, improve their communities. Kentucky is truly blessed to have so many people of compassion.

This Women's History Month is an entirely appropriate occasion on which to pay tribute to them and their accomplishments on this floor. I know my colleagues in the U.S. Senate join me in congratulating the leaders and supporters of the several groups I have enumerated here, as well as the many others I did not get to mention, for their good works. And the people of Kentucky thank them as well. History will remember them for their dedication and achievements.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SUSAN SMIT

• Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Madam President, today I wish to honor a leader who has tirelessly fought to educate young people in my State. After 9 years of dedicated service as superintendent of the Wagner Community School District, Susan Smit will retire at the end of the school year.

Susan Smit's career in education has spanned a period of over 30 years. She embarked on this path in 1970, first as a vocational home economics teacher.

Throughout her time in the field of education, she has held many positions: teacher, counselor, principal and superintendent. Most recently, Susan has spent the last 16 years serving in public schools in Indian Country, working to close the achievement gap between Native and non-Native students. Students in the Wagner Community School District face a unique set of challenges, and Susan Smit's approach to addressing them has been nothing short of visionary. The nature of the district is rural and low income, with over 70 percent of students qualifying for free and reduced meals.

As a founder and cochair of the Senate Impact Aid Coalition, I have enjoyed working with Susan over the years. In November 2012, Susan was invited to speak to congressional offices about the importance of continued Federal investments in education. Susan provided testimony to more than 80 congressional staff members and dozens of education leaders on the negative effect of education funding cuts and the need to maintain funding for critical education programs. During the 2013 annual conference for the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools, NAFIS, Susan was awarded the Friends of NAFIS award, one of the highest honors the organization bestows upon an educator. The honor recognized Susan for her aptitude for problem-solving and her ability to integrate the needs of the Wagner community into school initiatives.

As a superintendent, Susan has strived to broaden access to academic opportunities for youth by maximizing the use of technology in the classroom. The school district's one-to-one laptop initiative provides students with a laptop for their 4 years of high school. This program has increased retention and gives students the opportunity to hone computer skills that will serve them well beyond graduation. Students apply these skills to further their education through online classes. Although the school district does not have the resources to offer traditional advanced placement classes, this does not prevent students from enrolling in these advanced and rigorous courses. Advanced placement classes are offered online though the distance education lab.

One of the crowning achievements of Susan's tenure as superintendent is the implementation of Jobs for America's Graduates, JAG, Program in South Dakota. Through leadership development and mentorship, the program prepares at-risk students for success in college and future careers. Due in part to the program, the school district's graduation rate is above the state average, and the high school has been recognized as a distinguished school under the title I program.

Susan has been a tireless champion for expanding access to quality and affordable early education. As superintendent, Susan spearheaded the creation of a preschool program that is in

its sixth year and serves over 100 3- and 4-year-old children each year. Of the children enrolled in the program, 75 percent of the children are Native American. I am a strong supporter of early education and appreciate Susan's commitment to helping young people get the right start by nurturing their development and providing for their well-being.

As superintendent of the Wagner Community School District, Susan Smit has successfully overcome many of the challenges associated with operating a rural school district. It is my pleasure to thank her for many years of dedicated service to the youth of South Dakota. I wish Susan, her husband Roland, and their family all the best in retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO C.L. SWOPES

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, we salute our veterans for their selfless commitment and immeasurable sacrifice to protect this nation and its ideals so we can continue to be the greatest, freest country the world has ever known. Standing up to tyranny, oppression and cruelty around the world, our troops exhibit courage under the most daunting circumstances.

Today I want to recognize the service and sacrifice of one of our veterans from the "Greatest Generation" who exemplified these traits during World War II and who is celebrating a milestone—his 100th birthday, C.L. Swopes.

Mr. Swopes spent 25 years in the Navy, originally entering the service to get relief from the hardships of the Great Depression. "The money was what I was after," he told a local newspaper about his reason for enlisting.

Serving in the Pacific during WWII, Mr. Swopes experienced first-hand the realities of war on the U.S.S. Hornet during the Doolittle Raid, the Battle of Midway and its sinking at the Battle of Santa Cruz.

"Teaching you how to climb down a rope in practice is one thing, but reality is another," Mr. Swopes recalled to local media about his evacuation from the sinking aircraft carrier.

Admittedly a weak swimmer, he spent hours in the water until being picked up by a lifeboat.

He continued his military career after WWII serving around the world and throughout the country before retiring in Millington, Tennessee.

During his service, the Desha County native made a family with his wife Mary Jane. He impressed upon his children Marva, Paulette, Lorraine, and Anthony, the importance of education. "I wished for an education so many days," Mr. Swopes said because it would have given him additional opportunities in his career.

After his Naval career, Mr. Swopes returned to his native Watson, Arkansas to take over the family farm.

I thank C.L. Swopes for his service and sacrifice as he celebrates his 100th birthday and wish him many more years of happiness.●

THE CANNON STREET ALL-STARS

● Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, in the heart of Charleston, SC, lies Cannon Street; it's a modest street spanning just a few city blocks. However, within its history lies the story of what Dr. Creighton Hale, the former CEO of little league baseball, called "the most significant amateur team in baseball history."

In 1955, the area surrounding this street was one of economic blight and social unease. In an effort to keep kids out of trouble and teach skills that only team sports can provide, the local YMCA organized four little league teams for the neighborhood kids. The Cannon Street YMCA All-Stars consisted of seventeen players: John Bailey, Charles Bradley, Vermont Brown, William Godfrey, Vernon Grey, Allen Jackson, Carl Johnson, John Mack, Leroy Major, David Middleton, Arthur Peoples, John Rivers, Norman Robinson, Maurice Singleton, Leroy Carter, George Gregory, and Augustus Holt. They were coached and founded by: Lee J. Bennett, Walter Burke, Rufus Dilligard, A.O. Graham, Robert Morrison, R.H. Penn, and Benjamin Singleton. The team would advance to the Charleston City Little League playoff games but would never be given the opportunity to earn a spot in the Little League World Series. It was not because they were unworthy players or because they could not afford to go. The color of their skin stifled the dreams of these twelve-year-old boys.

The Charleston playoff games were boycotted in 1955 to preserve racial segregation. Because teams again refused to play against them, the Cannon Street All-Stars advanced past the state and regional playoffs. The National Little League invited the All-Stars to the Little League World Series as special guests; they could not compete for the title because technically they hadn't played their way to the championships. They returned to Charleston, dismayed and disappointed.

As children, they embodied the very characteristics that organized sports aim to impart—teamwork, courage and respect. As adults they have worked in productive and valuable careers such as architecture, law enforcement and education. As they have grown older, they are now volunteers in their communities—giving back, yet again. While they never had the opportunity to compete, their story has demonstrated where we have come from as a nation.

Last month members of my staff had the opportunity to meet several of the original Cannon Street Little Leaguers who traveled to Washington, DC to be recognized at Nationals Stadium before the Nationals-Phillies game. Their story remains powerful more than 65 years later, and I know my staff will never forget having the opportunity to meet them.

Today, the neighborhood that encompasses Cannon Street has developed into an integral part of the Charleston education and science community. It is

home to a number of colleges and universities and a world-class research hospital. The boys of the Cannon Street Little League Team are men who through their careers and service to the community have become assets to their neighborhoods. In spite of the adversity they encountered and the challenges they confronted, these young people illustrated to the world the absurdity of segregation and the hatred inherent in racism.

In the 55 years since they were excluded from competing to earn a spot at the Little League World Series in their own right, America has matured. I would like to believe that a handful of twelve-year-olds contributed to our maturity.

It is with great admiration that I share their story and my respect for these men with you, my colleagues.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, 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 messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:31 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agree to the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 933) making appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 1928a, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Speaker appoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the United States Group of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly: Mr. David Scott of Georgia, Mr. Schneider of Illinois, Ms. Frankel of Florida, and Mr. Connolly of Virginia.

The message further announced that pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 4355(a), clause 10 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Speaker appoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy: Mr. Shimkus of Illinois, Mr. Womack of Arkansas, Mr. Israel of New York, and Ms. Loretta Sanchez of California.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 649. A bill to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a