

years—chairing committees in support of his favorite candidates. He even put his name on the ballot one year for Governor but fell short by just 530 votes in the primary.

As a long-time Kansas resident, Don was well known and respected by many throughout our state, but especially in Southwest Kansas.

Don was a strong advocate for rural Kansas and the special way of life we enjoy in small communities across our great State. Through his service on several committees focused on the future of rural Kansas, Don helped make certain the next generation can return to the towns and communities they call home.

From his participation in Kansas politics to his public service career, Don was always looking for ways to serve his fellow Kansans and improve their lives. In recognition of that service, Don was awarded a lifetime achievement award by Washburn Law School in 2010.

His family and friends described him as someone whose generosity, enthusiasm, and overall optimism towards life touched the lives of so many. It has been said that Don had the character of “one in a million,” and that he did not “just participate in life, but made life happen.” Don had the unique ability to connect with just about anyone, but he was especially revered by his family and friends who looked up to him in many ways. Don lived each day to its fullest and his commitment to his fellow man serves as an inspiration to us all.

I extend my heartfelt sympathies to his wife, Sharon, his son, Craig, his daughter, Debra, and his many grandchildren. I know they loved him dearly and will undoubtedly miss him. I ask my colleagues and all Kansans to remember the Concannon family in your thoughts and prayers in the days ahead. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATING PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD YUNUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week Congress recognized one of the planet's leading visionaries and humanitarians by awarding Prof. Muhammad Yunus the Congressional Gold Medal.

The ceremony occurred just a few hundred yards from here in the august Capitol Rotunda. There to pay tribute to this proud son of Bangladesh, this banker to the poor, this Nobel laureate were Members of Congress, former

heads of state, diplomats, heads of major companies and foundations, and grassroots activists—all of whom have been inspired by the work of one great man—Prof. Muhammad Yunus. It was a great privilege for me to be there.

More than 6 years ago I introduced a resolution in the Senate to award Professor Yunus the Congressional Gold Medal. I was joined in this effort by my friends, former Utah Senator Robert Bennett and Representative RUSH HOLT in the House.

We had a lot of help outside of Congress in making this happen. Joanne Carter and her team at RESULTS were instrumental. Thousands of RESULTS grassroots volunteers across the country contacted their Members of Congress and asked them to support the effort to recognize Professor Yunus. Two of those volunteers were Cindy Levin and Richard Smiley from Illinois. I am pleased that both could be here to see their hard work pay off.

I first met Muhammad Yunus more than two decades ago in Bangladesh. His revolutionary concept of micro-credit and the Grameen Bank that he founded was helping to lift millions out of poverty. He loaned small amounts of money traditional banks wouldn't bother with to individuals traditional banks wouldn't bother with.

His innovative idea defied old beliefs. He proved banking could be done without collateral and that investing in women worked. Most of Grameen Bank's loans go to poor women who go from beggars to entrepreneurs.

I have seen it myself. Several years ago, in a ramshackle hut in Uganda, I met with three mothers who worked in the local market. I asked them, through an interpreter, how micro-credit had changed their lives. One woman said: “My knees have gone soft.” I didn't understand what she meant so I asked her to explain. She said that before she received the micro-credit loan that gave her a chance to go to market and make a little money, she used to have to crawl on her knees and beg her husband for money to feed her children. But she doesn't have to crawl anymore. Her knees have gone soft.

Over the last nearly 40 years, more than 160 million people on five continents have received microloans. His idea changed the world.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor Congress can bestow and the practice dates back to the Continental Congress. Unlike other awards, each Congressional Gold Medal is unique to the recipient. It is specifically designed and sculpted according to the wishes of the recipient. I couldn't be more thrilled with how this tribute to Professor Yunus turned out. It is truly beautiful.

The obverse of the medal was designed by Indiana artist Donna Weaver and sculpted by Phebe Hemphill. The portrait of Professor Yunus is meant to “accurately reflect his optimistic and cheerful personality.” He is depicted

wearing the traditional Bengali jamdani fabric design.

On the reverse, a “lotus open in full bloom, rising above the water and cradling the world in its open petals” evokes powerful symbolism. It was designed by Wisconsin artist Richard Masters and sculpted by Jim Licaretz. The Bangla inscription in the center is a quote taken from Professor Yunus' Nobel speech and reads, “Let us send poverty to the museum.”

Beyond the typical pomp and circumstance of these ceremonies, last week's event truly made history. Professor Yunus becomes the first Muslim to win the Congressional Gold Medal. Additionally, he becomes only the seventh person in history to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal and the Nobel Peace Prize. In doing so, he joins truly exceptional company. Consider the six others with whom he now shares this honor: Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr., Norman Borlaug, Elie Wiesel, Mother Teresa, and Aung San Suu Kyi. To most of us these individuals are giants of history; to Professor Yunus they are peers in the struggle to advance human dignity.

Many probably thought Professor Yunus would be a contender for the Nobel Prize in Economics, but in awarding him the Peace Prize, the Nobel Committee recognized that lasting peace and prosperity can only come when the poor can escape the prison of poverty. As I noted at last week's ceremony, this simple but important lesson from a Bangladeshi professor should not be lost here in Congress.

In addition to those I have already mentioned who contributed to this endeavor, there are many more who deserve a great deal of thanks. I would like to thank a few of them.

First of all, Professor Yunus' assistant and the director of the Yunus Centre, Lamiya Morshed. She has worked tirelessly throughout this process—helping in the medal design and development and successfully taking on the daunting task of planning and coordinating a complex series of ceremonies, receptions, and meetings for Professor Yunus.

The dedicated and professional staff of the U.S. Mint deserve great praise for their work to design and produce the medal. Throughout the process one person has held this project especially close to her heart, Leslie Schwager, program specialist for the Yunus Gold Medal, worked tirelessly with my staff, Lamiya, and within the Mint to keep the process on track.

I would finally like to thank Speaker BOEHNER and his staff, as well as the staff of the Senate Sergeant at Arms, for their cooperation and leadership on the ceremony.

At last, Prof. Muhammad Yunus, my friend, has received from Congress an honor he has deserved for so long. I congratulate him and his family. I thank the country of Bangladesh for sharing this beloved national hero with the world.