

Judson, IN, Joe was a shining star in the “greatest generation,” forced to learn the virtues of hard work, frugality, and self-reliance at a young age after losing his father when he was just 6 years old.

Joe was always proud of his service to our country during World War II. He served as a combat engineer in the 94th Division—a part of Patton’s Third Army and earned the European Medal with four bronze stars—signifying his participation in four separate military campaigns, including the Battle of the Bulge.

Recognized for his love of country, Joe was well-respected by those in his community. As one of the most patriotic men in Knox, his neighbors often referred to him as “Mr. Patriotism.” Many considered him a pillar of the Knox community, and over the past several decades, whenever there was a veterans function or celebration of patriotism in Starke County, chances are Joe was deeply involved. Joe worked to educate our youth about the sacrifices of our veterans and servicemembers by giving presentations about World War II at Knox schools and Veterans Day events. He also served as commander of VFW Post 748 in Knox from 1991 to 1994, and he was elected Starke County surveyor for 7 terms spanning 28 years.

I had the privilege of meeting Joe in 2009 when he visited Washington, DC through the Honor Flight Network. I am honored to have met such an admirable and patriotic man. Last month the State of Indiana laid this public servant—a veteran, a Yankees fan, and most of all, a hero—to rest. We are forever grateful for his service to our country.

Mr. Smrt is survived and deeply missed by his wife of over 63 years, Ursula Kelly, and their four children—Terry Smrt of Knox, Kevin Smrt of Knox, Christopher Smrt of Louisville, Kentucky, Madonna Johnson of Austin, Texas and five grandchildren and five great grandchildren, as well as friends, the United States Army family, and Hoosiers across the State of Indiana.

Joe Smrt was an American hero. He conducted himself with courage, bravery, compassion, honor, and integrity—both while serving our nation and throughout his time as a civilian back home in Indiana. Let us always remember and treasure the memory of this stalwart, brave man and honor his selfless commitment to serving his fellow citizens. May God welcome him home and give comfort to his family and friends.

RECOGNIZING JACKSON TOWNSHIP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I applaud Jackson Township Elementary School of Brazil, IN for being recognized as a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recog-

nized over 7,000 public and non-public schools that demonstrate a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among student groups.

Recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education is based on a school either being measured as an Exemplary High Performing School, where schools are among the State’s highest scorers in English and mathematics, or as an Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing School, where schools with at least 40 percent of their student body coming from disadvantaged backgrounds have reduced the achievement gap in English and mathematics within the last 5 years. Jackson Township Elementary School has made great strides in the area of improved proficiency in both English and mathematics.

In 2014 alone, Jackson Township Elementary School’s combined ISTEP+ passing rate for English and mathematics was around 96 percent for third through fifth grades. Jackson Township Elementary School’s effectiveness can be found in its Character Education program. In this program, students are familiarized with positive characteristics that are connected to character development introduced first in the home environment. Jackson Township Elementary School affirms that every student’s success is directly related to family and community support. With over 40 percent of its students identified as economically disadvantaged in a primarily rural farming town, Jackson Township Elementary School is seen as a beacon of light for the development of Indiana’s youth.

I would like to acknowledge Jackson Township Elementary School Principal Bradford C. Ennen, the entire staff, and the student body. It undoubtedly took hard work and dedication to achieve this prestigious award.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate Jackson Township Elementary School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

RECOGNIZING HAMILTON SOUTHEASTERN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I also wish to recognize Hamilton Southeastern Junior High School of Fishers, IN for being recognized as a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized over 7,000 public and non-public schools that demonstrate a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain rec-

ognition for educational accomplishments in closing any achievement gaps among student groups.

Recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education is based on a school being identified as “Exemplary High Performing,” schools that are ranked in the top 15 percent nationally in English and mathematics, measured by each State’s assessment, or as “Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing,” where schools with at least 40 percent of their student body coming from disadvantaged backgrounds are reducing the achievement gap in English and mathematics. Hamilton Southeastern Junior High School has made great strides in these areas.

Hamilton Southeastern Junior High School combines creativity and critical thinking with the tools of the 21st century. Students are taught complex problem solving, innovative collaboration, and the merits of integrity. Also, by offering mobile technology labs and focusing on college and career readiness, students are prepared for future success. These standards have led Hamilton Southeastern Junior High School to consistently achieve an A-rating and a four-star designation by the Indiana Department of Education. The staff and students’ hard work will continue to benefit the city of Fishers and all of Indiana.

I would like to acknowledge Principal Tim A. Mankin of Hamilton Southeastern Junior High School, the entire staff, and the student body. It undoubtedly took hard work and dedication to achieve this prestigious award.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate the Hamilton Southeastern Junior High School community, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

REMEMBERING ROBERT S. EDWARDS, JR.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I wish to honor the life of Robert S. “Bob” Edwards, Jr. Bob was an Army veteran, a successful businessman, a community leader, a friend, and an inspiration to us all.

Bob was an advisor with AXA Equitable Life Insurance Company and before that a successful textile executive.

Among his many business accomplishments, Bob received the Equitable’s Centurion Award and several Legion of Honor President’s Cabinet Awards. He also received recognition as Associate of the Year and as the agency’s representative to the national agents. Bob was also honored with the Equitable’s Community Leadership Award twice.

A compassionate community leader, Bob served as chairman of the Board of the Freestore Foodbank and founded its most popular fundraiser, the Rubber Duck Regatta. Proceeds from this fundraiser have provided millions of meals to Cincinnatians in need. This

past August, the Freestore Foodbank hosted the 20th Annual Rubber Duck Regatta. To celebrate this milestone, Bob set the ambitious goal of raising \$1 million dollars, which equates to approximately 3 million meals for hungry children and families. With Bob's leadership, that goal was reached.

In 2002 Bob received the Bengals Community Quarterback Award, the NFL league-wide volunteer recognition program, and in 2006 he received the Volunteer of the Year Award from Feeding America. Bob also served as president of the Dan Beard Council, Boy Scouts of America and founded the Council's United Food and Clothing Drive, serving as its general chairman for 2 years. He was awarded the Silver Beaver from the Boy Scouts and the Outstanding Citizenship Award from the United Way of Greater Cincinnati.

In 2010, Bob received the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Jefferson Award, the Nobel Prize for public service honoring community and public volunteerism in America. Bob was a graduate of Marietta College, and in 2011 he was added to Marietta College's prestigious Hall of Honor. He was also an active member of the Armstrong Chapel United Methodist Church.

Bob Edwards was a source of inspiration and he touched the lives of so many people throughout southwest Ohio. His extraordinary legacy lives on, and the impact he made in and around Cincinnati will serve as an example to many. He will be missed, but he will not be forgotten.

WORLD WAR II VETERANS VISIT

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, last month, 20 World War II Veterans and 3 Korean War Veterans from the Last Frontier Chapter of the Honor Flight Network traveled from Alaska to Washington, DC, to visit their memorials on October 21. I know you will join me in recognizing these heroes for their service to our Nation.

I would like to record the individual names of those who traveled from Alaska to be here to see the Nation's capital on October 21, 2014: Mr. Norman B. Bean, U.S. Army, Korean War; Mr. William R. Elam, U.S. Army, World War II; Mr. Henry E. Farrar, U.S. Coast Guard, World War II; Mr. Roy Harold Fay, U.S. Navy, World War II; Mr. Roland Henry Frank, U.S. Air Force, Korean War; Mr. Dewey Max Hodel, U.S. Army, World War II; Mr. Paul Patrick Jenkins, U.S. Army, World War II; Mr. Andrew Marion Johnson, U.S. Marine Corps, World War II; Mr. Arthur F. Jones, U.S. Air Force, World War II; Mr. Daniel K. Karmun, Army National Guard, World War II; Mr. Kenneth L. Krasselt, U.S. Navy, World War II; Ms. Vickey Malone, U.S. Navy, World War II; Mr. Henry Nosek, U.S. Air Force, World War II; Mr. Clyde Frank Oberg, U.S. Army, World War II; Mr. David C. Pratt, U.S. Air Force, World War II; Ms. Mary Julia Quesnel, U.S. Army Nurse Corps, World War II; Mr. John

Martin Schwulst, U.S. Marine Corps, Korean War; Mr. Harold Walter Stover, U.S. Navy Construction Battalion, World War II; Mr. Jean R. Therrien, U.S. Army, World War II; Mr. Calvin C. Topliff, U.S. Army, World War II; Mr. John Lindsay Tullis, Sr., U.S. Navy, World War II; Ms. Marcella Green Vreeland, U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve, World War II; Mr. Henry N. Warren, U.S. Army, World War II.

These veterans from Alaska join over 120,000 other veterans from across the country who, since 2005, have traveled to our Nation's capital to visit and reflect at memorials built here in their honor. This Honor Flight was made possible by generous public donations and contributions from those who wish to honor these heroes.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING HORSES4HEROES

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a national nonprofit organization within Las Vegas known as Horses4Heroes for being awarded the American Horse Council Time to Ride 100-Day Horse Challenge by introducing the most newcomers to horses in just 100 days. This unique program works to improve the lives of more than 6 million Americans who serve in the military, National Guard, as first responders and their families, by making horseback riding more affordable and accessible. As a longtime horse owner and horse enthusiast myself, I recognize the importance horses play as both companion animals and to our Nation's economy.

The brave men and women who have served the United States and fought to protect our freedom have often come home suffering from the effects of post-traumatic stress, PTSD. Veterans faced dangerous situations in order to protect Americans from harm, and we owe them a debt of gratitude. Horses4Heroes is a shining example of the kind of initiatives that will help to reintegrate our veterans into civilian life, combat the effects of PTSD, and help reduce the rates of suicide, while also providing comfort to grieving families.

There is no way to adequately thank the men and women that lay down their lives for our freedoms, but the founders and volunteers at Horses4Heroes are working to assist our Nation's veterans by giving them the opportunity to use horses to help reconnect and get reacquainted with their families. The organization was founded by Sydney Knott in 2006 operating out of her backyard and has now grown to incorporate affordable recreational, instructional, and morale-boosting health & wellness programs at more than 200 therapeutic equestrian centers across the country. This organization's continued dedication to serving veterans in the Silver State and the country is commendable.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I know the struggles that our veterans face after returning home from the battlefield. Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals, but to ensure they receive the quality care they have earned and deserve. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and service members in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am very pleased that veterans' service organizations like Horses4Heroes are committed to ensuring that the needs of our veterans are being met.

Today, I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing Horses4Heroes, an organization whose mission is both noble and charitable. I am both humbled and honored to recognize Horses4Heroes and I wish them the best of luck in all of their future endeavors.●

CONGRATULATING OKLAHOMA UNIVERSITIES

• Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I wish to applaud the University of Central Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma for being recognized by the Military Times as among the 100 best colleges for our Nation's veterans. With over 2,400 students who are veterans between them, UCO and OU provide outstanding support and academic experiences for our Nation's heroes after they have returned from their service to our Nation in uniform.

Founded in 1890 as one of Oklahoma's first institutions of higher learning, the University of Central Oklahoma is ranked 40th on this list and cultivates creativity and innovation from its 17,000 students, of which more than 700 are veterans. Students have the opportunity to earn diplomas from the more than 100 major areas of study offered at UCO. In 2010, UCO established the Veteran's Hero office to address the unique needs of our veterans and their families as they transition from the battlefield to the classroom. Continuously recognized as among the best universities in the Nation, UCO puts the extra effort into taking care of our veterans and has earned distinction in this area for 3 consecutive years in similar rankings by Victory Media, a nationwide veterans' employment recruiting service.

Also founded in 1890, the University of Oklahoma ranks 85th on this list and has nearly 30,000 students, of whom more than 1,700 are veterans who are earning degrees from the more than 150 majors offered on three campuses. Through the Veterans Support Alliance, faculty and staff volunteers at the University of Oklahoma have provided a positive and supportive learning environment for veterans. OU's efforts have helped student veterans and servicemembers achieve academic excellence and personal success. As a pacesetter for public higher education, OU is also ranked by the Princeton Review as among the top 10 public universities in the nation in terms of academic excellence and cost for students.