

Those who work with Gary describe his deep commitment to and compassion for the children he works with and his community.

In addition to his work transforming the Boys and Girls Club, Gary has served Manchester in many other ways. He was an integral member of the committee that brought the Verizon Wireless Arena to Manchester, an important addition to the city's cultural offerings. He's also been a longtime member of the Manchester Rotary Club.

I hope Gary enjoys retirement at his camp on Newfound Lake and spending time with his wife Dotti and his two daughters, Abby and Kara. I join the City of Manchester and residents across the Granite State in thanking Gary for his service and wishing him all the best for a long, happy and fulfilling retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO FRANK BIGGER

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I wish to honor Frank Bigger, who will retire as the Pocahontas Mayor after 4 years of public service to the citizens of Arkansas in this elected position.

Frank was inspired to run for city mayor at 67, the first political office he has held. Frank ran on the platform of economic prosperity and job creation. In that light, he fought hard alongside the Chamber of Commerce and the Intermodal Authority to bring a Poultry, Egg Company, PECO, processing facility to the county. This created more than 1,000 local jobs and led to improved infrastructure to accommodate the business.

Frank helped the community overcome the worst flooding residents remember. Highways, bridges and businesses were closed because of several feet of water from a levee breach of the Black River. Under Frank's leadership, Pocahontas recovered.

Before serving as mayor, Frank graduated from Arkansas State University and served on the Black River Technical College board of trustees. In 1996, he retired as president from what is now Pinnacle Frame and Accent, and has also worked as a part-time bank owner and has owned local cattle farms.

My staff and I have enjoyed working with Mayor Bigger on the projects important to Pocahontas. I am truly grateful for his years of honorable service and dedication to the community.●

REMEMBERING LEO MOSKOVITZ

● Mr. CASEY. Madam President, Jermyn and Northeastern Pennsylvania lost a long-treasured member of the community when Leo Moskovitz passed away on November 24 at the age of 109. Although he lived for well over a century, his death feels premature to his family and his community. His wife of 45 years, Ann, described him as one of a kind, a fantastic man in every sense of the word. His contributions to

the Commonwealth, both public and private, are many and will not be soon forgotten. As one of Northeastern Pennsylvania's true pioneers, he helped transform the region's economic and cultural outlook over the past century. Those who knew him likened him to a real-life history book, reciting stories from 80 or 90 years ago as if they had happened the day before. On any day of the week, he could catalogue the many evolutions the greater Scranton region went through with perfect detail.

As founder and president of the First National Bank of Jermyn, Leo presided over significant growth in the bank's assets, while always offering opportunity to the small business owners and people of Lackawanna County. He was a banker who bet on people and usually won for all concerned. Leo was ahead of his time in many ways, including promoting women in an era when such a practice was far from commonplace. From the vocational schools he helped establish, to the numerous art and cultural organizations he and his wife supported throughout the region, Leo Moskovitz's love and compassion for his community and its people endured for over a century, and will continue to shine for many years to come.●

FAR EXCEPTION THREE

● Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam President, the Mercer Engineering Research Center, or MERC, is the nonprofit, research and applied engineering arm of Mercer University, a private university founded in 1833 and located in a state-of-the-art research facility in Warner Robins, GA; just a short drive from Robins Air Force Base. For over 175 years, the University has served Georgia as a highly respected educational institution.

In 1984, the School of Engineering was established at the Macon, GA, campus with the charter class beginning studies in 1985. Two years later, MERC was established under the School of Engineering to provide locally available engineering and scientific services with critical specialized skills to the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, while simultaneously providing a workload support-base to the Mercer School of Engineering in its development of high-technology skills in the Middle Georgia area.

MERC has a highly qualified professional staff, complex tools and test equipment, and extensive technical capability in the fields of aircraft structural analysis and design, flight test instrumentation, reverse engineering and prototyping, laboratory structural testing, electronic warfare software algorithm development, web deployed applications with integrated database access, industrial engineering and logistics.

MERC also employs engineering interns providing an avenue for students to get real world, Air Force-related experience, and today they are the largest source of entry-level engineers for Robins Air Force Base while also pro-

viding superior support to all other military services, large and small business, and other research agencies.

MERC has been able to maintain a successful, strategic relationship with Robins Air Force Base because of its Ph.D-level knowledge of sponsors' requirements and problems; its developing capability; its broad corporate knowledge and quick response capability; independence and objectivity; freedom from conflicts of interest; and lower costs. Their demonstrated ability to provide efficient, cost effective solutions to pressing research and development problems established MERC as the preferred source of real solutions to real problems

Over the last few years, however, the Air Force and the Robins Air Force Base Small Business Office have emphasized increasing the percentage of small business contract awards; an initiative not without merit for sure. However, their interpretation and application of the Federal Acquisition Regulations, or FAR, has resulted in MERC essentially being barred from providing contracted services the likes of which they have provided with unmatched efficiency and significant savings for the Air Force for almost 30 years.

Since nonprofit research organizations by definition cannot be small businesses, they are excluded by law from competing for small business set-asides. However, the FAR offers seven equal and independent statutory authorities the U.S. government can apply which authorize, under certain conditions, contracting without providing for full and open competition.

Senior Air Force leadership at Robins Air Force Base have long supported the use of those exceptions, specifically, the so-called "Exception Three" which allowed for contacting without providing for full and open competition "when it is necessary to award the contract to a particular source or sources in order to establish or maintain an essential engineering, research, or development capability to be provided by an educational or other nonprofit institution or a federally funded research and development center."

That application of the FAR allowed Robins AFB to maintain the essential engineering capabilities of MERC to augment their own because under FAR Exception Three, MERC received sole source contracts when their expertise, flexibility and lower costs demanded it.

In recent years, however, the Small Business Office at Robins Air Force Base has approved the use of only one of the FAR exceptions, that being when "only one responsible source and no other supplies or services will satisfy agency requirements."

This application of the FAR, or misapplication if you will, makes it virtually impossible for the Robins Air Force Base to award certain contracts to any entity other than small businesses. It translates to higher costs and greater inefficiencies. Robins Air