

Another historically significant location in Oakland is the Church of the Presidents, built in 1868. Three United States Presidents, Grant, Harrison, and Cleveland, attended services there and preferred Garrett County to any other place for their vacations.

Today, Oakland and Garrett County are well known as one of the finest all-season resort areas, offering abundant sports activities including fishing, hiking, skiing—both alpine and cross-country—and boating. The natural beauty of this pristine area of our state led to Oakland's original name, "The Wilderness Shall Smile." In addition, the town of Oakland, with its large victorian homes and beautiful tree-lined streets, enhance the appeal of this cool, mountainous retreat.

Oakland has faced its share of economic difficulties. The departure in 1996 of Bausch and Lomb, the largest employer in the area, dealt a severe blow. Nevertheless, Oakland faced the problem head-on and orchestrated an intense effort to recruit alternative employers. In April of this year, Simon Pearce, a premier glass maker and Vermont's largest tourism attraction, opened a factory just outside of Oakland. Through the inspired leadership of Mayor Asa McCain, the town of Oakland will continue to thrive and prosper well towards the Town's 200th anniversary.

Oakland is a model of community spirit and cooperation. The activities planned to commemorate the 150th anniversary exemplify the deep devotion of its residents to their community. I share the pride of Mayor McCain and all of Oakland's citizens in their Town's historic past and optimism for Oakland's continued success in the years to come.●

VET CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to publicly acknowledge the five Vet Centers from around this country that are being recognized for their superior services as "Vet Centers of Excellence." While I am proud of the fine facilities located in California, Arizona, Georgia and West Virginia, the one I want to praise today is in my state of Vermont.

Vermont is very fortunate to have two Vet Centers—in fact we boast the first in the nation back in the days when the Readjustment Counseling Service (RCS) was just getting started with pilot sites strategically located around the country. The nation's first Vet Center, an excellent facility, was designed to help veterans in the Burlington, Vermont area.

The Vet Center we honor today opened in mid-1981 and is located in White River Junction, Vermont. It serves veterans on both sides of the Connecticut River in Vermont and New Hampshire. The team leader, Tim

Beebe, assesses their work modestly, saying "we are just doing our job." Maybe they don't understand the impact they have. This incredible staff go so far above their "job". They are caring, involved and understanding friends, devoted to offering a safe haven to those veterans suffering the emotional wear and tear of battle, often thirty years after leaving the service.

I am sure I don't need to remind my colleagues in Congress that the work being done at Vet Centers throughout the Country is enormously important. Over the years, the Vet Center program has been so successful in meeting the readjustment needs of Vietnam veterans that the VA Readjustment Counseling Service expanded the scope of their good work to veterans of all eras. This move was heartily endorsed by Congress and is now law. Long before this mandate, however, the White River Junction Vet Center subscribed to an open door policy to all veterans. Their message was simply put: "Welcome home—you are not alone."

Mr. President, I believe in the great work being done by Vet Centers every day throughout this country. I also know, however, that a "Vet Center of Excellence" award is only given to the those centers that stand a little taller than the rest. The White River Junction Vet Center staff exemplifies excellence. I want to offer my warmest congratulations to this incredibly talented group of professionals and remind them that they are shining examples to their colleagues in the 206 Vet Centers around the United States.●

NORTH DAKOTA STOCKMEN'S ASSOCIATION

● Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today, I would like to recognize a very important organization in my state, the North Dakota Stockmen's Association. I would also like to congratulate them on their 70th anniversary as an organization. Over the years, the North Dakota Stockmen's Association has been an invaluable asset to their members and to me. In particular, after 70 years of representing North Dakota family farmers and ranchers, the Stockmen have made great contributions to the cultural and economic heritage of North Dakota. Their successes have been accomplished through hard work and their consistent ability to produce the highest quality beef in the world.

Cattle provide an essential source of income for North Dakota farmers. Based on that fact alone, it is easy to understand the importance of the Stockmen's Association to my state's producers. While keeping the interests of cattle producers in the minds of elected officials, the members of this organization also provide valuable stewardship to the land, send their children to rural schools, support busi-

nesses, and help their neighbors through difficult weather and tough economic times. I would like to express my deep appreciation for their enduring efforts to support my state's communities, and again, I congratulate them for 70 years of service to the cattlemen of North Dakota.●

MICHAEL J. MCGINNIS

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Brother Michael J. McGinnis, who will be inducted as La Salle University's 28th President on September 24. Brother McGinnis was previously a member of La Salle's religion department, and for the past five years was president of Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee.

A native Philadelphian, Brother McGinnis joined the Christian Brothers University in 1965 and graduated Maxima Cum Laude from La Salle in 1970 with a degree in English. He obtained his Master's and Ph.D. in theology from the University of Notre Dame. While a graduate student at the University of Notre Dame, Brother McGinnis taught undergraduate courses in the Theology Department.

Brother McGinnis became assistant professor at Washington Theological Union from 1979 to 1984, and in 1984 joined the faculty at La Salle on a full-time basis, reaching the rank of full professor in 1993. Recognized for his leadership qualities, Brother McGinnis became Chair of La Salle's Religion Department in 1991 and the following year received the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching.

During his tenure as President of Christian Brothers University, undergraduate enrollment and retention rates increased, a Master's of Education program was established, the Athletic Department joined the NCAA Division II Gulf South Conference, and the Center for Global Enterprise was founded. He also took an active role in the Memphis area community, serving on the boards of the Economic Club of Memphis, the Memphis chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art. Brother McGinnis also served on the Memphis Catholic Diocesan Development Committee and the board of the Christian Brothers High School.

Brother McGinnis has published numerous articles in scholarly journals, written chapters in religious books, and edited six volumes of the Christian Brothers' Spirituality Seminar Series. His book reviews have appeared in journals such as Horizons, Theological Studies, Journal of Ecumenical Studies, and Holistic Nursing Practice. His professional memberships include the Catholic Theological Society of America, American Academy of Religion, and College Theology Society.

Mr. President, Brother McGinnis has distinguished himself through his impressive academic and professional achievements, as well as through his dedicated service to the community. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Brother Michael McGinnis on his induction as President of La Salle University.●

RECOGNIZING THE CITIZENS AGAINST LAWSUIT ABUSE

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize a volunteer group of West Virginians who have joined together to educate the public on an important issue affecting our state and the nation. These individuals, who have formed Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse, CALA, are disseminating information to the public about our civil justice system, and they are working to encourage jury service and personal responsibility in our society.

CALA spokespersons based in Huntington, Charleston, Bluefield, Logan, Bridgeport, Fairmont, Morgantown and other cities in our state are educating the public about how lawsuit abuse can affect consumers. The CALA groups in West Virginia have raised funds to provide scholarships to students statewide through essay contests where the students address the important topic of jury service and personal responsibility.

Teaching our children the value of civic responsibility is a vitally important component of learning, and CALA's efforts have not gone unnoticed. By emphasizing the virtues of jury service, CALA is helping to give our children a more well-rounded education and is promoting values which will serve these children, and our future, well. I am proud that many of West Virginia's finest students, from our public and private secondary schools, have participated in these essay contests and have been recognized for their efforts in our local media. The winning high school essayists in last year's CALA scholarship contest were Joshua Linville, Sherman High School, Boone County; Amanda Knapp, Pt. Pleasant High School, Mason County; Matthew Walker, St. Joseph Catholic High School, Cabell County; Courtney Ahlborn, Parkersburg South High School, Wood County; Sarah Mauller, East Fairmont High School, Marion County; and Misty Lanham, Tygarts Valley High School, Randolph County.

Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse groups have declared September 19 through 25 to be "Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week" in West Virginia. I commend the citizens for their dedication and commitment and to acknowledge this week as time of public awareness on the various issues affecting civil justice in our state. Our citizens

should be encouraged to educate themselves about our civil justice system and how they can help to make it the best in the world.●

CONGRATULATIONS TO CHIEF JACK KRAKEEL

● Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge one of Georgia's outstanding civil servants. On August 29, 1999, Jack Krakeel, Director of Fayette County's Fire and Emergency Services, was named Fire Chief of the Year by the International Fire Chief's Association. This award is a fitting honor to a man who, through his hard work and leadership, has provided Fayette County with a superior fire and rescue team and has devised innovative methods to deal with emergencies.

Under Chief Krakeel's leadership, Fayette County's emergency services have found creative solutions to deal with ever-changing challenges. An important program implemented by the Department requires cross-training of employees. All career members of the Fayette County Department of Fire and Emergency Services are trained as both firefighters and paramedics. This gives the department incredible flexibility when dealing with severe emergency situations.

Fayette County, Georgia, is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. In response to this rapid increase in demand for services, Chief Krakeel has developed plans implemented by the Fayette County Board of Commissioners which will maintain an average emergency response time of five minutes. In a business where the difference between life and death is often measured in seconds, the importance of this initiative cannot be underestimated.

Chief Krakeel's department also recognizes the need to inform families, particularly children, on the importance of fire safety. Under Chief Krakeel's leadership, the department was the first in the state to enact a multi-family housing sprinkler ordinance and also created a portable fire safety education home which teaches children how to escape from a fire.

Jack Krakeel has also serves in a variety of leadership roles related to emergency services. He is the national Chairman of the National Fire Protection Association's "Technical Project in Emergency Medical Systems." Also, Chief Krakeel is in his third year as a member of the Board of Directors of the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

On a more local level, Chief Krakeel is a member of the Georgia's Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council, and is in his twelfth year of service with the organization. Not long ago he helped lead the formation the joint EMS Committee of the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs and the Georgia Firefighters Association.

Other accomplishments during Chief Krakeel's impressive career are too numerous to mention. It is not an exaggeration to state that few people have had a greater individual impact on modern emergency service techniques than Chief Jack Krakeel. Mr. President, I offer my congratulations to Chief Krakeel for the honor bestowed upon him, and my hopes that he will continue to provide innovation and leadership for years to come.●

MR. K. PATRICK OKURA

● Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, this coming weekend a long time friend of mine, Mr. K. Patrick Okura, will be celebrating his 88th birthday. For the past decade, Pat has been extraordinarily active in guiding the Okura Mental Health Leadership Foundation in order to ensure that young Asian Pacific American health professionals, representing a wide range of disciplines, will have the skills and experiences necessary to eventually achieve leadership roles throughout our nation's health and human services agencies. Pat obtained his baccalaureate and master's degrees in psychology from the University of California at Los Angeles and has long been a member of the American Psychological Association which recently published a special article highlighting his monumental accomplishments. He is currently on the Board of Directors of the National Mental Health Association, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and the Japanese American National Museum. He is a past-President of the Japanese American Citizens League and founder of the National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse.

In July of 1971, during the Presidency of Richard Nixon, Pat assumed the position of Executive Assistant to the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, NIMH. For the next decade, he remained at a high level policy position within the NIMH, shepherding to fruition numerous innovative mental health initiatives. He was an active participant in the deliberations of President Carter's landmark Mental Health Commission. For many of us in the U.S. Congress, those were the glory days for mental health. There was a sense of genuine excitement and optimism. Our nation was finally beginning to understand and appreciate the social and cultural aspects of health care, not to mention the importance of ensuring that all Americans should receive necessary care. Under Pat's leadership, our nation truly committed itself to the far reaching "deinstitutionalization movement," an effort which would eventually bring mental illness out of the closet and ensure that all of our citizens would retain their individual civil liberties, notwithstanding any particular diagnosis, lack of economic resources, or lack of immediate family.