

Woodlawn Organization, at Operation Push, where he was executive vice-president, and in government, the fight was always the same—to open up opportunities for people, to expand the possibilities for people, to build hope, and self-respect, and economic security.

Joe Gardner made Chicago a better place. He died far too soon; there was still so much he wanted to do. I will greatly miss him, and I know the people of Chicago and the state of Illinois will miss him, particularly the poor people he cared so much about.●

TRIBUTE TO HIS MAJESTY KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ OF THAILAND

● Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, who will celebrate the 50th anniversary of his accession to the throne on June 9, 1996. This is indeed an auspicious occasion, as King Bhumibol is the first Thai king to have reigned for 50 years.

King Bhumibol has been the overseer and benefactor of remarkable change and progress for his nation. From the beginning of his reign, he has tirelessly devoted his time and effort to the well-being and welfare of the Thai people. Under his stewardship, government has become an instrument of progress for people, as evident by the more than 1,800 royal development projects he has initiated in the areas of agriculture, environmental conservation, public health, occupational promotion, water resources development, communications, and social welfare.

During his reign, Thailand has experienced a dramatic transformation in its industrial structure to become a leader among developing nations. Manufacturing accounts for over 31 percent of the nation's economy and exports are booming. Textiles have supplanted rice as Thailand's major export item, and Thailand is now a major exporter of sophisticated high-technology products. King Bhumibol's leadership in diversifying his nation's economy and encouraging foreign investment has opened new doors of opportunity and prosperity to his people and has propelled Thailand to a place of respected prominence among the nations of the Pacific rim.

Not only are the industrial and technological advances significant, but King Bhumibol has achieved these gains while preserving the cultural integrity and national heritage of the Thai people. He is a much beloved leader and national patriarch, who has created a unique version of the modern monarchy. Firmly committed to the development of democratic principles, he has always been on the side of peace and prosperity and has responsibly guided his nation within the parameters of his constitutional authority.

The United States and Thailand have enjoyed a longstanding friendship and economic partnership from which both

nations have tremendously benefited. I have had the privilege of visiting Thailand on several occasions to promote opportunities for trade and investment and have been profoundly grateful for the assistance and hospitality I have received. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with this remarkable nation for the continued peace and prosperity of both of our countries.

I know that my colleagues in the U.S. Senate join me in congratulating King Bhumibol for his magnificent leadership and prosperous reign, as we look forward to many more years of friendship with his great nation.●

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE [VAVS]

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service [VAVS]. Its half-century of caring for veterans and their families in communities across the country has generated more than 440 million hours of service and introduced millions of citizens to the fulfillment and satisfaction of volunteering.

VAVS was born in the burgeoning, postwar VA medical system as VA hospital administrators sought a way to organize the spontaneous volunteer movements that developed in communities near military and VA hospitals. From the start, VA officials recognized this volunteer movement as a natural adjunct to the quality of health care provided veterans. In April 1946, under the leadership of General Omar Bradley, then head of VA, representatives of eight national veterans and service organizations met in Washington, DC, to form a national advisory committee. The result of the meeting was a plan through which both community organizations and individuals could participate in volunteering and help manage those volunteer programs locally and nationally through advisory committees.

That plan was approved May 17, 1946, the birth date of the VA Voluntary Service. Today, there are 60 major veteran, civic, and service organizations participating on the National Advisory Committee, with more than 350 other national and community organizations supporting VAVS.

Still based in the VA health care system, VA volunteers have expanded with that system into every area of patient care and support, and have followed the VA mission into community settings such as hospice programs, foster care, hospital-based home care, veterans outreach centers, homeless veterans programs, and special events for the disabled. In addition, community volunteers work increasingly with VA's other service delivery venues such as benefits offices and national cemeteries.

VAVS volunteers have been particularly active in supporting community

programs aimed at reaching and serving the homeless. These 1-to-3 day events offer a variety of services to the homeless, and VA resources focus on assisting veterans, who make up at least one-third of the homeless male population in a typical community.

Volunteers have also become an integral part of the system of national and local showcase events aimed at introducing persons with disabilities back to mainstream activities. These include the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games—the largest wheelchair athletic meet in the world—the National Disabled Veterans Golden Age Games, and the National Disabled Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Corporate volunteers play a strong role in these events and have become elemental to their success. Growing participation from the corporate sector is setting the pace for the future of VAVS, along with a strong and growing youth volunteer program that is introducing teenagers and college students to careers as well as to community service.

The focus remains as it was in those early post-World War II years, responding to each community's desire to put its veterans first. That's why last year, volunteers contributed a total of 14,021,586 hours of service through VAVS programs, 12,649,676 of which came from 93,821 regularly scheduled volunteers. Numbers do not tell the real story, however. There is no way to calculate a community's caring and sharing with some of its most important citizens. For 50 years, VAVS has been there to channel that caring in a productive, meaningful way.●

DISTRICT COURT RULING SHOULD SPUR SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO REFORM CLASSIFIED PRICES

● Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, on Monday, Minnesota District Court Judge David Doty released a decision holding that class I prices used in the Federal milk marketing order system are arbitrary and capricious. I rise today to applaud that ruling. It is the second such ruling by the district court in 2 years. It is my hope that the combination of this most recent ruling and Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman's commitment to restore equity in Federal orders will finally be enough to change this discriminatory pricing system for good.

Mr. President, class I prices, prices that farmers receive for fluid milk, increase at a rate of 21 cents for every 100 miles a farmer lives from Eau Claire, WI. This systematic discrimination against Wisconsin dairy farmers has never been adequately defended by the Department of Agriculture which has great administrative latitude to set these prices. Department officials have chosen to continue the discriminatory pricing scheme when they had the authority to change it and the knowledge that it should be changed.