

from the University of North Texas and a law degree from the University of Denver. Ms. Sopper was an accomplished dancer and choreographer and continued to coach at gymnastics clubs.

Ms. Sopper practiced law as a Lieutenant in the Navy's JAG Corps, focusing on defense and appellate defense. She had left the Navy JAG Corps and was an associate with the law firm Schmeltzer, Aptaker & Sheperd, P.C. when she found her dream job: to coach the women's gymnastics team at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

It was a one year appointment and Ms. Sopper was looking forward to the challenge. Her mother, Marion Kminek, says Mari-Rae was excited about the opportunity. "I said go for it. Life is too short. It was something she had always wanted to do and she was so happy and excited," recalls Kminek.

At the time of her death, Ms. Sopper was moving to Santa Barbara to begin her appointment. Her close friend, Mike Jacki, recalls "This was to be a new adventure for Mari-Rae, and an opportunity to get back into the sport she loved. We have lost a very special person. She was prepared to make her dream come true, and in an instant it was gone."

Mari-Rae Sopper is remembered for her loyalty, strong values, excellent work ethic and spirit for life. She is survived by her mother, Marion Kminek and stepfather, Frank Kminek, her father Bill Sopper, sister Tammy and many loving friends.

None of us is untouched by the terror of September 11th, and many Californians were part of each tragic moment of that tragic day. Some were trapped in the World Trade Center towers. Some were at work in the Pentagon. And the fates of some were sealed as they boarded planes bound for San Francisco or Los Angeles.

I offer today this tribute to one of the 51 Californians who perished on that awful morning. I want to assure the family of Mari-Rae Sopper, and the families of all the victims, that their fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters will not be forgotten.●

IN RECOGNITION OF SISTER ROSA ALVAREZ

● Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Sister Rosa Alvarez for her commitment to social service for Delaware's immigrants. She has dedicated her life to opening doors to families that otherwise might have been closed by language and cultural barriers. In doing so, she has become a lifeline for Georgetown's Hispanic community.

In the last decade, Latino immigrants have flooded Georgetown, transforming the ethnic and cultural backdrop of southern Delaware. Sister Rosa has helped the community overcome language barriers so that they can

start healthy families and lead productive lives.

Sister Rosa has been present for hundreds of area births. Known as "la abuelita," or "little grandmother," Sister offers help to Georgetown's mothers and children, particularly those mothers who are children themselves. Placing heavy emphasis on prenatal care, she helps young mothers make doctors appointments and provides transportation if necessary, to make sure they get to them. She successfully campaigned for vitamins for the community's pregnant mothers, and actively mentors parents who need assistance.

Sister Rosa works with La Esperanza, a community center for Sussex County's Latino population doing fantastic work in its own right, to provide social services for thousands of immigrants faced with inaccessible healthcare, domestic violence, reduced education and legal complications.

Working alongside Mark Lally and Marjorie Biles in my Georgetown office, Sister Rosa helps the downstate Hispanic community navigate the maze of paperwork often required to get work visas, Medicaid benefits and housing. She helps Spanish-speaking immigrants fill out English language forms and devotes time every week to helping families translate and pay their bills.

At some point, all of us need to look back and take stock of where we have been and where we are going. Have we lived our lives in the service to others, or merely for ourselves? At the end of the day, can we say with confidence that we did our best and worked to our fullest potential?

I had the pleasure of meeting Sister Rosa at La Red, a Hispanic health center in Sussex County, DE, earlier this year. I was struck by her boundless energy and kind heart. She offers people hope. Her dedication intensifies the work of others, and pushes us to take an introspective look at the purpose of our own lives.

Mahatma Gandhi, one of Sister's idols, said in the 1920s, "If we are to reach real peace in this world, we shall have to begin with the children." Today his sentiments are seen in her actions.

At a time when the face of our Nation is in constant flux and the call to service rings louder than ever, it is individuals like Sister Rosa who leave me feeling hopeful about our country's future. It is she who brought many in the community to my office for assistance, she who is empowering community leaders, she who is making a difference with her infectious smile.

I rise today to honor and thank Sister Rosa for her selfless dedication to the betterment of others. She is a remarkable woman and a testament to the community she represents.●

IN CELEBRATION OF EAST SIDE CHARTER SCHOOL

● Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the East Side Charter School in Wilmington, DE. Five years after opening their doors to some of the State's most economically and educationally disadvantaged children, they have amassed a record of meeting and exceeding expectations. The achievement gap is narrowing in the First State, and the East Side Charter School is leading the way.

Located in the middle of what is called the projects, in properties managed by the Wilmington Housing Authority on the east side of Wilmington, East Side Charter School is home to low-income students in grades K-3 who face unique challenges.

Over 80 percent of the students at East Side Charter School live in poverty. Most of the children live with only one parent, few of whom completed any college education. Many live in neighborhoods with high incidence of violence and crime, and some are without proper nutrition and health care.

But at this school, kids can come early and stay late. They have a longer school year. They wear school uniforms. Parents sign something akin to a contract of mutual responsibility. Teachers and administrators are given freer reign to innovate and initiate. The attendance rate is nearly perfect. Parents are given a better chance to help children fulfill their potential.

At this school the halls are filled with talented faculty, skilled supervisors, and dedicated staff. Principal Will Robinson challenges students and empowers them to meet those challenges.

When the East Side Charter School started 5 years ago, the odds were stacked against its success. The school has flourished though, in spite of the daunting statistics. One of almost 200 public schools in the State of Delaware, from the wealthiest to those struggling the most, East Side Charter School was the only one in the last few years where every student tested met or exceeded our State's standards in math.

As Governor of Delaware, and now as Senator, I have shared with people across America the story of East Side's incredible success. I tell them about the teachers like Barbara Juraco, who daily demonstrate unparalleled commitment and patience, the support staff that's there when needed, the students who again and again exceed expectations, and the parents and family members who understand they have an obligation to be full partners in the education of their children. Together, they serve as an inspiration and an example to communities across the country.

Delaware is a small State, but we are building a growing record of achievement in public school education. Statewide, scores have again increased in all

grades and across ethnic lines for reading and math, proving that we are closing the achievement gap.

Much of what we have accomplished in Delaware, and at the East Side Charter School, serves as a model for our Nation.

I rise today to offer my full support as future generations of students and educators at East Side Charter School ready to face the challenges of the 21st century and overcome them.●

IN RECOGNITION OF LTC JOHN BURKE'S RETIREMENT

● Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of LTC John Burke upon his retirement from the U.S. Air Force. John is the longest certified C-5 pilot in the history of the U.S. Air Force, and has served his country with distinction for 32 years.

Since 1995, Lieutenant Colonel Burke has served as Chief Pilot for the 709th Airlift Squadron at Dover Air Force Base. Assigned to overseas mission support, joint service exercises, humanitarian relief, Presidential movement and aircrew training, he has been indispensable to his squadron's success.

In his latest position, Lieutenant Colonel Burke was responsible for evaluating procedures and techniques that ensured the safety and efficacy of the C-5 in its strategic airlift missions, as well as evaluating its pilots.

As you may know, the C-5 is the Air Force's largest cargo aircraft, capable of quickly moving large numbers of men, women and materiel to troubled areas around the world.

The C-5 will ensure our military readiness for generations to come, as will Lieutenant Colonel Burke's legacy of leadership and heroism.

Lieutenant Colonel Burke is a well-rounded, seasoned officer with a record for consistently combining effective leadership and professionalism. He leads by example—motivating people, making key decisions, producing results and maintaining high morale. He has amassed an impressive 7,400 flight hours and frequent accolades.

Throughout his distinguished career, Lieutenant Colonel Burke flew in vital missions and earned numerous decorations. In a career that spans three decades, Lieutenant Colonel Burke has served in significant military campaigns, such as Nickel Grass, Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Just Cause.

On May 30, 1972, barraged by anti-aircraft fire flying over Southeast Asia, Burke landed in Song Be to deliver much needed fuel and ammunition to allied troops fighting hostile forces, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross. Additionally, he has garnered numerous other medals and commendations, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Aerial Achievement Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon, and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross.

Military service runs in the New York native's blood. Lieutenant Colonel Burke's father was a World War II Army Air Force navigator and bombardier, and his mother was an Army nurse. Joining the U.S. Air Force in 1970, Lieutenant Colonel Burke carried on the family tradition of military allegiance.

LTC John Burke marked his career with consistent, exemplary leadership in service to his Nation, earning a reputation for loyalty, dedication, integrity, and honesty. Upon his retirement he leaves a legacy of commitment to freedom that generations will follow. I commend him for his remarkable service and wish him the best in his future endeavors. He is a patriot in every sense of the word.●

NATIONAL GUARD COUNTER DRUG STATE PLANS PROGRAM

● Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the National Guard and urge my colleagues to support the National Guard Counter Drug States Plan Program.

The National Guard role is to provide counterdrug and drug demand reduction support as requested by local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations with a counterdrug nexus. The National Guard provides this support in consonance with the Office of National Drug Control Policy and Department of Defense guidance.

The mission of the National Guard Counter Drug Program is to assist and strengthen law enforcement and community-based organizations in reducing the availability of, and demand for, illegal drugs within the State and Nation through professional military support. The principal elements of counter-drug military support include highly skilled personnel, specialized technology, facilities, and diverse types of military training and skills. Operationally, this translates into port security assistance, operating non-intrusive inspection devices, aerial and ground reconnaissance, technical support, general support, community anti-drug coalition support, youth drug awareness programs, and use of training facilities.

The National Guard offers numerous military-unique skills to the counterdrug mission. These include linguist and translator support, investigative case and analyst support, communications support, engineer support, diver support, marijuana eradication support, transportation support, maintenance and logistical support, cargo and mail inspection, training of law enforcement and military personnel, surface reconnaissance, and aerial reconnaissance. In addition, the National Guard provides command, control, communications, computers, and information, C4I, integration; logistics planning; tactical and strategic operational and intelligence planning; the ability to support around-the-clock oper-

ations; liaison skills with civilian authority and interagency cooperation; resource integration; force protection training; operational security enforcement; communications security enforcement; and risk management skills.

We must fully fund the National Guard Counter Drug States Plans Program. The National Guard's success in interdicting drugs and other contraband contributes to the security of the Nation as a whole. Using my home State as an example, Florida has valid support requests from law enforcement and community-based organizations that would require approximately 250 personnel. Under the constraints of the estimated fiscal year 2003 budget, the National Guard was able to field 111 personnel, resulting in unfunded requests for 139 personnel and an unfunded requirement of 99 personnel based on an optimal program size of 210 personnel. In fiscal year 2002, the State of Florida fielded 148 personnel, and unfunded personnel requests totaled 102.

I am also a great believer in a balanced counterdrug program, both interdiction and demand reduction. The National Guard does some of the finest demand reduction work in the country. Young people look up to these citizen-soldiers and listen to what they say.

Counterdrug personnel assigned to perform drug demand reduction activities utilize numerous military skills including command, control and communication skills, tactical and strategic planning, liaison skills and training design and implementation skills. These assist communities with work plans, realistic time lines and assigned responsibilities. This support is essential for many community-based organizations in order to mobilize and sustain their efforts.

Additionally, the military value system and discipline instilled in all counterdrug personnel creates a significant demand to serve as role models and mentors supporting a wide array of prevention activities. Community based prevention organizations rely on National Guard personnel to incorporate this unique military orientation into activities such as youth camps, ropes challenge courses, high adventure training, high school drug education, Drug Education for Youth, mentoring, and other prevention and skill training activities.

The National Guard also provides unique facilities and equipment such as armories, training sites, obstacle courses, aircraft and wheeled vehicles in support of community prevention strategies. These facilities and equipment are often the only resources available to conduct youth camps, coalitions meetings or experiential learning initiatives. The leadership skills and military values embedded within our youth hopefully provide a morale foundation for future generations, as well as conveying to many thousands of youth the value of military service.