

TRIBUTE TO MISSOURI FARM
BUREAU

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 2003

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me take this means to pay tribute to the Missouri Farm Bureau President Charlie Kruse and members of the Missouri Farm Bureau Federation, which was recently recognized as one of the nation's top state Farm Bureau organizations. The Missouri Farm Bureau was awarded the American Farm Bureau's most prestigious award, the President's Award, at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 84th Annual Meeting.

The American Farm Bureau's President's Award is awarded to state Farm Bureaus that excel in the organization's 12 program categories. The categories include: membership; commodity and marketing information; young farmers and ranchers program; public relations; state and local governmental affairs; leadership and organization development; public policy implementation; special programs; political education programs; policy development; agriculture in the classroom; and agriculture promotion. In each of these categories, the Missouri Farm Bureau received a gold star for excellence, which is the highest possible recognition a state Farm Bureau can receive. This is the eighth year that the Missouri Farm Bureau has been able to claim the top award.

Mr. Speaker, Charlie Kruse and the members of the Missouri Farm Bureau can be proud of the accomplishments. I know the Members of the House will join me in saluting the Missouri Farm Bureau Federation for receiving this well deserved award.

IN COMMEMORATION OF U.S.
CENTRAL CREDIT UNION

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 2003

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, U.S. Central Credit Union (U.S. Central), located in my home state of Kansas, has worked to support corporate credit unions in serving their members through innovative and premier financial services for nearly 30 years. U.S. Central was chartered in 1974 to assist corporate credit unions in meeting the financial services needs of consumer credit unions throughout the country.

While providing financial products and services to corporate credit unions, and growing to become a \$33 billion financial institution, U.S. Central has never forgotten the hallmark of the credit union philosophy of "people helping people." Credit unions were created more than 100 years ago to allow people of ordinary means gain financial independence. U.S. Central strives to provide the best value in products and services for its corporate members, and this same guiding principle is passed on to the more than 80 million credit union member consumers that are living in our country today.

As a financial cooperative, U.S. Central strives to make decisions that are in the best

interest of its member owners—the nation's corporate credit unions. Its leaders have learned that this concept brings success to all of us, and that equitable service is of paramount importance.

U.S. Central should also be recognized for its compassion for its surrounding community. Because U.S. Central's membership is comprised of corporate credit unions, which serve consumer credit unions throughout the country, it has defined its community as both local and national in scope.

Nationally, U.S. Central supports organizations such as the National Credit Union Foundation, which helps credit union employees and their families in disaster-recovery situations, and assists credit unions in making affordable mortgages to people of modest means, among other activities. Another focus of U.S. Central's support is the World Council of Credit Unions, which promotes credit union development worldwide for the purpose of expanding affordable financial services to people all over the globe.

Locally, U.S. Central actively supports several community programs. Two key projects that fit well with the company's broad objective of helping to foster people's financial well-being are Kansas City Saves, a coalition encouraging urban residents to save and build wealth more effectively, and the Kansas JumpStart Coalition for Financial Literacy, which supports personal finance education for children in grades K-12.

Mr. Speaker, I commend U.S. Central Credit Union for its support, dedication and commitment to the credit unions across our nation, and I applaud them, as they prepare to dedicate their new corporate facility in Lenexa, Kansas, on February 5, 2003, and as they honor the architects of the credit union community that helped credit unions become an important financial resource for today's consumers.

RECOGNIZING THE DISTINGUISHED
SERVICE OF JUDGE GUY H.
MCMICHAEL III UPON HIS RE-
TIREMENT FROM THE DEPART-
MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 2003

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I rise today to pay tribute to Judge Guy H. McMichael III, who is retiring after a lifetime of public service, including more than 25 years at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Judge McMichael's career includes stints in the Army, as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, on the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and at the VA under five Administrators, four Secretaries and five different Presidents.

Judge McMichael graduated from Harvard University and received a law degree from the University of Michigan. He served in the Army for two years and later was in private practice for four years, while also serving as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for the State of Indiana. In 1971, he became General Counsel for the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, where he remained for six years until joining the VA following the election of President Carter.

When Judge McMichael first came to the VA with Administrator Max Cleland in 1977, he brought a healthy distrust of what people said and what they did. His discernment and skepticism was resented by some, but over the years, his ability to persuade others of the importance of being honest brought integrity to almost all parts of the VA that he touched. That a man who was the Administrator's right hand during the Carter years would stay on and perform such exemplary service for an additional 23 years is quite remarkable.

In 1981, Administrator Robert P. Nimmo appointed Guy McMichael to the VA Board of Appeals as an Administrative Judge. He was appointed Chairman and Chief Administrative Judge in 1990, and has remained in that position until his retirement this year. Over the past several years, Judge McMichael has also filled several important positions on a temporary basis, including Acting Chief of Staff, Chief Information Officer, and Acting Under Secretary for Benefits.

Mr. Speaker, Judge McMichael's legacy is that of a man who served his nation with compassion and distinction, and advanced the interests of veterans. Truly, he saw his work for veterans as a mission, one that he could devote the full talents God blessed him with. Veterans are better off because he served them as long as he did.

THE INTRODUCTION OF SPIRIT
CORRIDOR LEGISLATION

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to introduce companion legislation to a bill being introduced by Senator BINGAMAN of New Mexico in the Senate. I am also very pleased that my colleagues Mr. JERRY MORAN of Kansas, Mr. FRANK LUCAS of Oklahoma, Mr. MAC THOMBERRY and Mr. SILVESTRE REYES both of Texas, and Mr. STEVE PEARCE, one of my colleagues in the New Mexico delegation, have joined me in introducing this legislation.

This important bill seeks to designate U.S. Highway 54 as a high priority corridor on the National Highway System. The corridor would be known as the Southwest Passage Initiative for Regional and Interstate Transportation Corridor, or the SPIRIT Corridor. U.S. 54 runs from the border with Mexico at El Paso, Texas, through New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma, to Wichita, Kansas. I am very hopeful that this legislation will help improve transportation infrastructure and stimulate economic development in the communities and states through which U.S. Highway 54 passes.

Mr. Speaker, those who live in the eastern United States know that communities are more compact and the commutes much shorter. For the intermountain west, on the other hand, it is not unheard of for people to have to commute 80 miles to work and 80 miles back home. That is just one of the reasons designating U.S. 54 as a high priority corridor is so important to improving the transportation infrastructure and promoting economic development. Safe and efficient highways are critical to all types of traffic, whether it be tourists visiting or goods being shipped from point to