Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer a tribute to one of Knoxville, Tennessee's finest citizens. Many in this body and around the Country will not recognize his name, but when Mr. Robert Coulter "Dink" Eldridge, Sr. passed away at the age of 85 on February 21, 2003 this Nation lost a great American. Many Knoxvillians join in mourning his death.

Dink Eldridge graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1940. During his final years at the University, he managed the Volunteer Football team as they went undefeated in regular season play and participated in the Orange Bowl, the Rose Bowl and the Sugar Bowl. More than victory marked his time with the Volunteers however. Those who knew him at this time also remember his dedicated leadership and desire to see every athlete reach his fullest potential.

In addition to his time managing the Volunteers, Dink managed the East Army All Star football team at Yale University with the great General R.R. Neyland. In 1942 Dink Eldridge was called to serve his Nation in the United States Army where he served with distinction as a second lieutenent in the Tank Corps. Here again, Dink proved his willingness to serve his fellow man and was awarded both a Purple Heart and Bronze Star medal for his efforts. After a brief period away from the military, Dink was called on again, this time in the Korean War.

During his professional career, Dink demonstrated a deeply held commitment to excellence. Following his early days as a lineman for Bell Systems, Dink steadily rose in his career. While his supervisory work for Bell took him to cities across the State, Dink was eventually able to return to Knoxville where he served as District Engineer until his retirement in 1971.

Like many leaders, Dink was unable to remain retired for long. In 1986, he was named president of the Concord Telephone Exchange. Dink provided steady leadership to this organization during a period of tremendous growth and remained president until his second retirement in 1993.

With this said, Dink is possibly best known to the people of East Tennessee for his dedicated work in the community. His generosity of time touched countless lives. Through his work on the executive board of the Great Smoky Mountain Council of the Boy Scouts of America and a President of the Veteran's Honor Medal and the New York State Exercise Support Ribbon with two "E" devices.

Without question Mr. Speaker, Chief Benson is a very special person. He willingly served his nation, exuding loyalty and pride. For his unrelenting service, Chief Benson can retire with pride. For his loyalty and service to his nation, exuding loyalty and pride. For his service awards include the Kuwait Liberation Medal from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Kuwait Liberation Medal from the Government of Kuwait.

Chief Benson's New York State military awards include the New York State Long and Faithful Service Award with five shield devices, the New York State Desert Storm Service Medal, the New York State Defense of Liberty Medal and the New York State Exercise Support Ribbon with two "E" devices.

To his wife Anna Yvonne I say thank-you for being such a supportive and loving part of his life and to his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren whom I hope may continue carrying the banner of service your father and grandfather held so high.

Mr. DUNCAN. Without question Mr. Speaker, Chief Benson is a very special person. He willingly served his nation, exuding loyalty and pride. For his unrelenting service Chief Benson can retire knowing he has earned such a status. I would like to wish him well in his retirement years, as he will now be able to spend more free time like to wish him well in his retirement years, as he will now be able to spend more free time