

war that few believed would last more than a matter of months. On July 17 of that same year, Congress enacted legislation that would authorize the President to purchase cemetery grounds to be used as national cemeteries for soldiers who died while in service to the country. It was not long after that, in 1873, that all honorably discharged veterans became eligible for burial in national cemeteries. According to local legend, the hoofbeats of Custer's Cavalry may still be faintly heard today in the shadows of the Black Hills, where the Black Hills National Cemetery has provided a dedicated area for the honored burial of past and present South Dakota members of our Nation's armed forces and their eligible dependents for the past 55 years.

Too often, it seems that Congress forgets those men and women who sacrificed a part of their lives to serve their country. In a Nation as wealthy as ours, the very least we can do to repay veterans for their service is to provide them with the final resting place they deserve. Today, the National Cemetery Association ensures our veterans have a proper burial, while also maintaining the national cemeteries as shrines to their memory. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, the "nation must care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan."

The Black Hills National Cemetery has long been part of that respected tradition since World War II, when the first four burials were conducted on September 27, 1948. Three additional burials were done before the official dedication of the Black Hills National Cemetery on October 3, 1948. Since those initial entombments, the remains of more than 17,000 courageous soldiers who have served their country have been laid to rest there, including South Dakota's only casualty from Operation Iraqi Freedom, Hans Gukheisen.

The Black Hills National Cemetery is also the final resting place to such notable men as United States Senator Francis H. Case, who also gave the dedication address in 1948, suggesting that the Black Hills National Cemetery be the "Arlington of the West," and Brigadier General Richard E. Ellsworth, Commander of the Rapid City Air Force Base, which was later renamed Ellsworth Air Force Base in his honor, was also laid to rest there.

As the father of a soldier who has recently returned from Iraq, I have made it a priority to give veterans the recognition and treatment they deserve for their outstanding service to our country. I am proud to have the Black Hills National Cemetery located in my home State of South Dakota, and I am honored today to congratulate the Black Hills National Cemetery on their first 55 years of service. I know that our entire Nation shares in this expression of gratitude.●

MILLIE MAIRS AWARDED 2003
"ANGELS IN ADOPTION" AWARD

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise today in honor of Mrs. Millie Mairs, a woman who has demonstrated her enormous capacity for love by serving some of West Virginia's most vulnerable children. Through her work with the West Virginia Children's Home Society Adoption Program, Millie has touched the lives of many new families in my home state and is a cornerstone of adoption services there. Later this month, Millie will be honored alongside other "Angels in Adoption." This is a special award created by the Congressional Adoption Caucus. I would like to take a moment to tell you more about the work and accomplishments of this quiet, gentle lady who has worked on behalf of children for more than twenty years at the West Virginia Children's Home Society.

The West Virginia Children's Home Society was created in 1896 and has long provided care for children in need. Today, the Society offers adoptive, child protective, and emergency services through an expanded mission. Twenty-eight years ago, Millie Mairs came to the Children's Home Society Adoption Program as an adoption secretary in order to assist West Virginia families who hoped to adopt a child. Since then, Millie has served those families in a variety of roles and has maintained a strong relationship with many of them, including some of her very first clients. From administering support services to meeting with prospective parents to guiding birth mothers through appropriate after care, Millie's name has become synonymous with adoption advocacy in West Virginia.

Those who know Millie best say that no one is better suited to serve as an adoption advocate than she. Her colleagues use words such as "rare," "special," "kind," and "considerate" in order to describe her. Her clients depend on her as they complete necessary paperwork and interviews, and as they work through the many emotions that adoption brings. And while Millie serves as a valuable resource for those entering into the adoption system today, her knowledge of previous adoptions is priceless to those who seek even the smallest amount of information about their past. Millie has provided a comforting ear and soothing words to these individuals since her first days at the Children's Home Society and has also reunited birth mothers and their children from that time. She has always understood and has tried to convey to others that adoption is a selfless act of love from the perspective of both birth mothers and adoptive parents. As you can imagine, this has brought great comfort to children, birth mothers, and adoptive parents alike.

The Angels in Adoption Award recognizes individuals like Millie who work every day to better the lives of others through the field of adoption. On Sep-

tember 30, Millie and other Angels will come to Washington in order to be recognized for their good works. While they will look just as any other visitors to the Capitol complex that day, I have been assured by Millie's colleagues and by others that they truly are angels in our midst. I hope that you will help me in welcoming them and honoring them. Further, I hope that you will carry their message with you: that all children deserve a safe, healthy, and permanent home and that, for some children, this is only possible through adoption.

I have worked for many years in bipartisan coalitions to promote adoption and improved services for abused and neglected children. While these issues rarely command headlines, they change the lives of children and families across our country. People like Millie Mairs and programs like Angels in Adoption remind us of the importance of our adoption and child welfare programs. In 1997, Congress passed the Adoption and Safe Families Act to ensure that a child's health and safety are paramount, and to express the belief that every child deserves a permanent home. Since then, adoptions from foster care have nearly doubled. While this is wonderful news, more than 100,000 children remain in foster care. As Millie and her peers would tell us, we clearly have more work to do.

I am delighted to have had this opportunity to tell you more about Millie Mairs and her work with the West Virginia Children's Home Society. I have long believed that the people of West Virginia are its greatest resource; individuals such as Millie prove this point again and again.●

HONORING JUDY HADLEY OF
LINCOLN, RHODE ISLAND

● Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I wish to share with my colleagues a story demonstrating one person's ability to protect the environment from the threat of pollution, for the benefit of wildlife and human enjoyment alike.

Thirty years after the passage of the Clean Water Act, the Blackstone River has shaken off a legacy of neglect and re-emerged as a vital community asset. The water quality has improved, a bikeway is under construction, and mill buildings are being restored as apartments and condominiums. The National Park Service is promoting a new appreciation for the work and culture of the families who have made the Blackstone Valley their home. And just last week, I joined the Army Corps of Engineers in celebrating the restoration of wetlands in a floodplain that had been paved over for 50 years. So there is a great deal of activity on the banks of the Blackstone.

While the Federal Government has been a major player in the river's re-birth, none of these exciting developments would have been possible without the personal commitment of Blackstone Valley residents. It is their hard