

learn a great deal from Sally, but we all can.

Mr. President, I ask that a copy of an article from the December 4, 2007, edition of the Washington Post entitled "The Teacher at the Head of the Class" be printed in the RECORD.

The material follows.

[From the Washington Post, Dec. 4, 2007]

THE TEACHER AT THE HEAD OF THE CLASS

(By Ellen Edwards)

At first glance you might have thought you had come upon some improbable tropical bird, full of color and feathers, dressed in layers of patterns on patterns, a pile of rolling blond curls on her head.

This, of course, is what captivated children when they first looked at Sally Smith, the founder and director of the Lab School of Washington, one of the nation's premier places for students with learning disabilities. She didn't look like any other adult in their experience, and they discovered she didn't think like any other head of school, either.

Sally Smith, who died Saturday from complications of myeloma at 78, looked right back at those young faces and saw potential, intelligence, the charm and grace of childhood.

Where other schools saw kids who didn't pay attention, she saw kids who viewed the world in creative ways. Where other schools saw frustration and anger, she saw kids desperate to learn, and she created a school for them. She gave them respect, she gave them hope and she gave them the tools to succeed.

Her own son's difficulties with learning caused her to look for ways to teach him, and from the beginning, even before she became a nationally known educator, she placed the responsibility directly on adults in charge. In the school handbook, Smith wrote, "our philosophy is based on the belief that a child's failure to learn means that the teaching staff has not yet found a way to help him. It is up to the adults to seek out the routes by which each child learns, to discover his strengths and interests and to experiment until effective techniques are found."

Anyone who ever met Sally has a story to tell. She was larger than life: in her size and presence, in her ambitions, in her throaty voice advocating her ideas. She cultivated artists, and often had them to her Cleveland Park home. She cultivated support for the Lab School, from wealthy and powerful potential donors to parents who could give only their time. Her fundraising gala highlighted learning-disabled achievers, who over the years have included Charles Schwab, Magic Johnson, Robert Rauschenberg, Cher and James Carville. In a closed-door session, the students would face those big names and ask blunt and painful questions: "Did you feel stupid compared with your siblings?" "Were your parents embarrassed by you?" "How did you feel when you were asked to read out loud in class?"

The core of all of Smith's techniques, in her 10 books and the PBS series about her work, is empathy. I first heard her name a decade ago from a reading specialist in the Midwest when I was beginning to think I might have a dyslexic child.

You're near Sally Smith's school, aren't you?" she asked me. "That's the place." She said it with such confidence and certainty that I knew I had better figure out who Sally Smith was.

I met Sally first as a reporter, sitting in her office and listening to her talk about students the Lab School has taught. I remember in particular the story of the young boy who was good at numbers but not good at reading. The Lab faculty, which individ-

ualizes homework, a study plan, classwork, everything, for every student, put him in charge of the school store. He loved selling things. They found a way to catch his interest and motivate him to learn to read. He grew up and out of Lab, and, Smith boasted, had become a successful businessman.

She talked about another student who learned kinesthetically, through movement. The teachers spread patterns out on the floor for him to learn math, a map for him to learn geography, and he danced his way through learning.

She told me how often tears had been shed in that office, which was crowded with art from students and professionals, and which had an open door policy so vigorously enforced that most people didn't think she even had a door. Parents came to her desperate to find a school where their child would be accepted and challenged, where they could learn and not be warehoused until they dropped out. They brought with them horror stories from other schools that had treated their kids as if they were stupid, made them feel terrible about themselves and chucked them in the corner as a lost cause.

After a few months at Lab, they often wept again, with gratitude, because the school meant no more endless rounds of tutors and therapists. It meant free time after school for exhausted children who worked hard every minute of the school day. It meant an end to the isolation of parenting a child who learned differently, because the school community embraced the potential of these children.

Five years ago I met Sally again, but this time as the parent of a prospective student. It was clear my son had the family dyslexia gene, and reading was going to be a struggle. He enrolled for third grade, where 12 students in his class had four educators.

His lead teacher that year spent a long time figuring out how to get him interested in reading. Of course he was interested, but it was so hard and frustrating for him that he pushed it away. Finally, she realized his interest in baseball might do it. Every day, his homework consisted of reading lessons she had taken from news stories about baseball and had rewritten at his reading level. Every day she created a page of four or five questions for him to answer from his reading. Little by little, his reading got better. He was studying without realizing it. He thought he was just having fun.

This learning environment was Sally Smith's creation, her gift to the world of education. She saw how arts could teach all kinds of things, and she shaped the Lab School around the arts. She hired artists as teachers because she knew they would think creatively. They taught sophisticated content without reading.

In his first year there, the mythologies of ancient times were taught through what was called Gods Club. The students were taught by Cleopatra, complete with headdress. The students dressed in togas. Each took the identity of a Greek god. To enter the classroom, they used passwords that changed every day, such as "Corinthian," which taught them the name of a column's capital. A painted Nile River ran through the middle of the classroom just as the real Nile runs through Egypt.

When the winter break came, and we took our son to the Egyptian galleries at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, he read the hieroglyphics to us while we listened slack-jawed.

This was her famous Academic Club method, one of the many she shared as professor in charge of American University's masters program for special education. Our son went on to Knights and Ladies Club, taught by El-

eanor of Aquitaine, and Renaissance Club taught by Lorenzo de Medici. He jostled and learned about Holy Wars, made cheese and tasted ravioli, painted a fresco and took on the persona of Dante.

He learned, and after four years he moved on to a mainstream school, which was Smith's ultimate goal for all her students.

A couple of months ago, my son was visiting the school and saw Smith. She was in a wheelchair, dressed in her usual eye-popping splendor. She took his hand and asked him how he liked his new school.

She really wanted to know the answer, and she really listened when he gave it. That was Sally Smith's genius. ●

#### REMEMBERING CHARLES E. "BUTCH" JOECKEL

● Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the loss of Vietnam veteran Charles E. "Butch" Joeckel, who was buried yesterday with military honors at the Columbarium in Arlington National Cemetery.

Butch was raised in Colmar Manor, MD, graduating from Bladensburg High School in 1965. In 1966 he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and fought for his country in Vietnam. He was seriously wounded during the Tet Offensive in 1968, losing both of his legs above the knees. For his heroic service, Butch received the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat Valor, and numerous meritorious citations, medals, and honors.

Butch's service to his country did not end in Vietnam. He became a national service officer for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and in 1988 he rose to the position of DAV national adjutant, serving in this capacity until 1993. He served on the board of directors of Help Disabled War Veterans, and contributed his time, wise counsel, and strong efforts to the President's Task Force to Improve Access to Health Care for our Nation's Veterans at the National Veterans Legal Services Program. In 2004 he was appointed to the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission.

Butch was an inspiration to all who knew him, and especially for those who were disabled. He accepted the heavy responsibility of "role model" for disabled war veterans with grace, dignity, and a special twinkle of humor.

For all of his selfless service to his country, Butch's family always came first. He is survived by his wife Dianne; his three children, Chuck, Tammy and Scott; his father, Charles, Sr.; his sister and brother-in-law; three sisters-in-law; 11 nieces and nephews; and seven grandchildren.

Butch was an American patriot who believed in his country and fought for his country and the veterans who built it. America owes him our thanks for his contributions and sacrifices. Our country lost an American original, who will be missed by many. ●

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH ATKINS  
NICKERSON, JR.

• Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to the extraordinary life and work of Joseph Atkins Nickerson, Jr., of Chatham, MA, a retired builder and prominent local historian who passed away on November 23 at the age of 89. Joe lived his entire life in the town of Chatham. The only exception was during his service to the Navy during World War II.

Joe was a direct descendent of the founders of Chatham, and he will always be remembered for his leadership in preserving the town's history. He had an extraordinary ability to recall people, places, and dates, and his storytelling skill was legendary.

Joe was a member of numerous local sports teams in his youth, and at the age of 22 he pitched a no hit, no run, no walk, 22 strike-out perfect baseball game for the local Chatham team. He was also an original member of the Chatham Town Band, and played the clarinet beautifully in concerts and parades for over 50 years. His skills as a town musician were a great source of pride for all his family.

Joe served the town in many other ways as well. He was a volunteer fireman, a member of the School Building Committee, president and historian of the Chatham Historical Society, a founding member of the Conservation Association, president of the Boston Glass Club, and a member of the Retired Men's Club.

In recent years, Joe and his beloved wife Gerry worked together to write a book, "Chatham Sea Captains in The Age of Sail." Before he passed away he was delighted to learn that his long-awaited book would be published by History Press, Inc. of Charleston, SC, in February 2008. I am sure it will be a wonderful memorial to Joe and a delight to the people of Chatham and all of us who love Cape Cod. His remarkable life and his commitment to the community will continue to inspire us all for years to come, and we mourn the passing of this amazing son of Chatham. •

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:37 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill and joint resolution, without amendment:

S. 888. An act to amend section 1091 of title 18, United States Code, to allow the prosecution of genocide in appropriate circumstances.

S.J. Res. 8. Joint resolution providing for the reappointment of Patricia Q. Stonesifer as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 236. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to create a Bureau of Reclamation partnership with the North Bay Water Reuse Authority and other regional partners to achieve objectives relating to water supply, water quality, and environmental restoration.

H.R. 1759. An act to establish guidelines and incentives for States to establish arsonist registries and to require the Attorney General to establish a national arsonist registry and notification program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2930. An act to amend section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 to improve the program under such section for supportive housing for the elderly, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3526. An act to include all banking agencies within the existing regulatory authority under the Federal Trade Commission Act with respect to depository institutions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3690. An act to provide for the transfer of the Library of Congress police to the United States Capitol Police, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3791. An act to modernize and expand the reporting requirements relating to child pornography, to expand cooperation in combating child pornography, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4043. An act to amend the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989 to preserve and expand minority depository institutions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4252. An act to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through May 23, 2008, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 147. Concurrent resolution recognizing 200 years of research, service to the people of the United States, and stewardship of the marine environment by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its predecessor agencies, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 251. Concurrent resolution commending the National Renewable Energy Laboratory for its work of promoting energy efficiency for 30 years.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 236. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to create a Bureau of Rec-

lamation partnership with the North Bay Water Reuse Authority and other regional partners to achieve objectives relating to water supply, water quality, and environmental restoration; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 1759. An act to establish guidelines and incentives for States to establish arsonist registries and to require the Attorney General to establish a national arsonist registry and notification program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 2930. An act to amend section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 to improve the program under such section for supportive housing for the elderly, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 3526. An act to include all banking agencies within the existing regulatory authority under the Federal Trade Commission Act with respect to depository institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 3791. An act to modernize and expand the reporting requirements relating to child pornography, to expand cooperation in combating child pornography, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 4043. An act to amend the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989 to preserve and expand minority depository institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

The following concurrent resolutions were read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 147. Concurrent resolution recognizing 200 years of research, service to the people of the United States, and stewardship of the marine environment by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its predecessor agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H. Con. Res. 251. Concurrent resolution commending the National Renewable Energy Laboratory for its work of promoting energy efficiency for 30 years; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE  
CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2416. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the alternative minimum tax on individuals and replace it with an alternative tax individuals may choose.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER  
COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-4127. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Watermelon Research and Promotion Plan; Assessment Increase" (Docket No. AMS-FV-07-0038) received on November 27, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4128. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Mango Promotion, Research, and Information Order; Amendment to Term of Office Provision" (Docket No. AMS-FV-07-