

ever, standardized tests offer frustrating assessments of progress, and dropout rates and graduation rates alike moved in the wrong directions. But, thanks to the hard work and commitment of over 1,000 current students and teachers, in the past few years Central has begun an impressive turnaround that is heartening to us alumni.

I offer my congratulations on this 150th anniversary and every hope that Detroit Central High School will continue to provide excellent education and imbue students with the skills and outlook to seize the day and find success in school and in the years that follow.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE AVERN COHN

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a great citizen of Michigan, the Honorable Avern Cohn. Avern has distinguished himself as a leader among leaders in Michigan's legal community and the Michigan community at large. Later this month Avern's synagogue, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, will offer a tribute to him and I am honored to join in recognizing his many accomplishments and contributions to our community life that he has so strengthened and supported.

Professionally, for nearly three decades Judge Cohn has served on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. He currently serves as the Senior Judge, a position he has held for the past nine years. His quick wit and sharp mind have left a lasting impression on the countless attorneys who have argued before him. Throughout his career, Avern's guiding beacon has been justice, and his legacy is one of true independence and impartiality.

Avern's commitment to justice in Michigan has extended well beyond his courtroom. He is a past director of the Detroit Bar Association, a former trustee of the Detroit Bar Foundation, and served as director of the American Judicature Society. Before he was appointed to the court, he led a successful private practice that continues to flourish today. He also served the people of Michigan in an array of positions including as chairperson of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, chairperson of the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners, and as a member of the Michigan Social Welfare Commission.

As a member of the board of trustees of Shaarey Zedek, a former president of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, and a past vice president of the American Jewish Committee, Avern has used his intellect and drive to the great benefit of our Jewish community. He has also helped bring the focus and resources of these organizations to the fight for the poorest and most vulnerable among us. He is a mensch in the truest sense: his wholehearted dedication to a host of noble causes has marked his character and his life.

I should mention as well that it was Avern's father who introduced my par-

ents to each other. I am proud to call Avern my cousin.

Avern is recognized far and wide as a rarity. All who have known him, who have had the good fortune to work with him, or who have come before him are appreciative of his unique commitment to doing what is right. Many who have never heard his name have benefited and will continue to benefit from his lifetime of good deeds. Barb joins me in offering our thanks and congratulations to Avern. Mazel Tov!

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

SACRAMENTO RIVER CATS TRIPLE-A CHAMPIONSHIP

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am pleased to recognize the 2008 Minor League Triple-A baseball champions, the Sacramento River Cats.

On September 16, 2008, the Sacramento River Cats, of the Pacific Coast League, PCL, defeated the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees, of the International League, 4 to 1 in the Bricktown Showdown to become back-to-back Triple-A champions. Sacramento is the Triple-A affiliate of the Oakland Athletics.

The Sacramento River Cats finished the regular season atop the Pacific Coast League Southern Division with a record of 83 wins and 61 losses. The River Cats were assisted this season by their always faithful fan base, which has led Triple-A in attendance for nine consecutive seasons.

In the opening playoff series between the River Cats and the Salk Lake City Bees, the River Cats excelled by scoring 39 runs en route to a 3-games-to-1 series victory. The series victory demonstrated the River Cats' depth of talent as four starting pitchers, four relief pitchers, two infielders, and one outfielder were called up to the Oakland Athletics before the series began.

In the Pacific Coast League Championship Series, the River Cats defeated the Texas Rangers Triple-A affiliate Oklahoma City Red Hawks, winning the series three games to one to repeat as PCL champions. During this series, the River Cats proved their ability to perform on the road by achieving two of their three victories in Oklahoma. The win also earned the River Cats their fourth Pacific Coast League Championship in the last 6 years.

In the Triple-A championship game, River Cats manager Todd Steverson showcased his talented pitching staff. The River Cats used six pitchers who combined for nine strikeouts while only giving up a single run. The victory gave the Pacific Coast League all three of the Triple-A championships since the Triple-A championship game was reinstated 3 years ago.

As the River Cats' fans, players, and staff gather to celebrate this remarkable accomplishment, I would like to congratulate them on an outstanding season.●

NORTH CAROLINA AZALEA FESTIVAL

• Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I recognize the 62nd North Carolina Azalea Festival, NCAF, which will be held from April 1-5, 2009, in the Greater Wilmington area.

The Azalea Festival is a showcase for Wilmington's rich array of artwork, gardens, history and a testimony to the rich heritage of coastal Carolina. This year's celebration marks the 50th anniversary of the Azalea's Festival's name being changed from the Wilmington Azalea Festival to the North Carolina Azalea Festival.

The NCAF is Wilmington's annual community celebration and the largest festival of its kind in the State. This festival encourages volunteerism and civic participation as it contributes to the region's economy and promotes the unique qualities of Wilmington's river-to-the-sea community.

The festival's concerts, fairs and special events are viewed by more than 1 million people each year, in person and through media coverage. More than 200,000 people are estimated to attend the annual 2-day street fair, while more than 100,000 gather to watch the festival parade.

It takes an extensive volunteer network to run the NCAF. More than 1,000 volunteers are needed to stage over 125 events ranging from concerts to art shows, a street fair with interactive displays, home and garden tours, a parade, special exhibits, a circus, and a variety of other entertainment and events.

The NCAF generates an additional approximate \$5 million to the area's economy and the Southeast Tourism Society selected the NCAF as one of its top 20 events for the second year in a row.

I am pleased to recognize the unique cultural and historical contributions of the 62nd annual North Carolina Azalea Festival.●

RECOGNIZING GULFSTREAM AEROSPACE CORPORATION

• Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge an important occasion in the history of Savannah, GA, and the business-aviation industry—the 50th anniversary of Gulfstream flight.

Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation got its start in 1958 when Grumman Aircraft Engineering Company, a company known for military aircraft production, developed the first aircraft specifically designed for business travel.

On August 14, 1958, Grumman test pilots Carl Alber and Fred Rowley took that aircraft—the twin-engine turbo-prop Gulfstream I—on its maiden flight over the company's headquarters in Bethpage, NY. After 800 hours of additional testing, the G-1 received Federal Aviation Administration certification on May 21, 1959.