

managed to cover almost the entire school, including the principal's office. In 1989, the school established the Special Friends Program—the first in South Windsor—to provide a safe setting, counseling, and friendship to at-risk students and those students experiencing sudden changes in their lives.

In the 1990–1991 school year, Nancy Mason, the school nurse, and Priscilla Spencer, the school's gym teacher, introduced an inventive project designed to teach students about both geography and physical fitness. The students were told that the school's mascot—Popcorn the Panther—was going to take a walking trip across the United States in which he would travel a mile for every mile that each student walked or ran. For the rest of the year, students were required to walk or run at least half a mile during every recess period and were encouraged to walk more. Prizes were given to the class and grade that contributed the most miles to Popcorn's journey. Throughout the year, teachers would have friends and family members who lived around the country send postcards "from Popcorn" so that students could see the fruits of their efforts and learn about various regions of the country. This successful program concluded with a large welcome home ceremony at the end of the school year, with several students joining Popcorn, playfully by an older student, for his final walk back to school.

At a time when much of our focus is understandably on improving schools that are not living up to standards, it is important to take time out to recognize those schools that have consistently provided a quality education to their students and that are constantly striving to find new ways to inspire students to reach new heights. For 50 years, Pleasant Valley School of South Windsor, CT, has been one of these schools; providing students with the ideal setting in which to develop their abilities, meet friends, and cultivate new interests. It truly is a place to learn, to grow, and to care. I congratulate all of Pleasant Valley's students, alumni, faculty, parents, and volunteers on a remarkable 50 years and look forward to seeing how they tackle the challenges of the future. Their dedication is truly an inspiration and should serve as an example to us all.●

REMEMBERING CAPTAIN WENDELL B. RIVERS

● Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Navy CAPT Wendell B. Rivers, who passed away on Saturday, May 9, 2009.

Wendell "Wendy" Rivers was born in Seward, NE, on July 6, 1928. He graduated from Seward High School in 1946, where he was senior class president, an all-conference football and basketball player, and an 880-yard track specialist. Upon graduation, Rivers enlisted in the U.S. Navy, receiving an appointment to the U.S. Naval Acad-

emy in 1948 and graduating in 1952, when he received his commission as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy. Following a brief tour on a destroyer during the Korean conflict, he entered flight training in 1953, receiving his wings in March 1954.

Over the course of his career, Captain Rivers distinguished himself in many assignments as a naval aviator, missile project officer, flight deck officer, and squadron operations officer. Subsequent assignments were in naval aviation on the west coast at San Diego, Moffett Field, Monterey, Point Mugu, and Lemoore. During the Vietnam conflict, Captain Rivers deployed on his last cruise from Alameda, CA, aboard the USS Coral Sea, as a member of Air Wing 15, Attack Squadron 155. On February 11, 1965, he flew the first of 96 combat missions over North Vietnam. Tragically, on his 96th mission, he was shot down and captured at Vinh, North Vietnam, where he was then held in captivity for 7½ years.

While a prisoner of war, POW, Captain Rivers kept his faith in God, country, and Navy, despite all the hardships facing him and his fellow POWs. His steadfastness and devotion to others was an inspiration to those fellow POWs. In fact, shortly after he was freed, as the guest of honor at a celebration of America's independence in Nebraska's Fourth of July capital city, which was also coincidentally his hometown of Seward, Captain Rivers expressed that deep down he and his fellow POWs were always convinced they would one day come home.

After the tremendous sacrifice he had already endured, Captain Rivers continued to serve the Navy until 1976. The end of his career included serving as the head of the Aircraft Survivability and Vulnerability Branch of the Naval Air Systems Command, for which VADM F.S. Petersen said, "It was through Captain Rivers' personal forethought and initiative that this important aspect of Naval Aviation came to fruition."

CAPT Wendell B. Rivers passed away in his home on May 9, 2009, at the age of 80. Over the course of his career, Captain Rivers received numerous commendations, decorations, and medals, including the Silver Star, Legion of Merit with Star, Bronze Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Vietnam Service Medal with three Silver Stars, Navy Occupation Medal, World War II Victory Medal, China Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, and Korean Presidential Unit Citation. These awards reflect Captain Rivers' bravery and selfless service toward the security of our great country. The life and service of individuals such as Captain Rivers represents an example of patriotism we should all strive to emulate. I join all Nebraskans in mourning the loss of Captain Rivers and offer my deepest condolences to his family.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, 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.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:41 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Zapata, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2162. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 11th Avenue South in Nampa, Idaho, as the "Herbert A Littleton Postal Station".

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

H. Con. Res. 84. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and objectives of a National Military Appreciation Month.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 454. An act to improve the organization and procedures of the Department of Defense for the acquisition of major weapon systems, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House insists upon its amendment to the bill (S. 454) to improve the organization and procedures of the Department of Defense for the acquisition of major weapon systems, and for other purposes, and asks a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon; and appoints the following Members as the managers of the conference on the part of the House: Messrs. SKELTON, SPRAT, ORTIZ, TAYLOR, ABERCROMBIE, REYES, SNYDER, SMITH of Washington, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Messrs. BRADY of Pennsylvania, ANDREWS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Messrs. LANGEVIN, COOPER, ELLSWORTH, SESTAK, MCHUGH, BARTLETT, MCKEON, THORNBERRY, JONES, AKIN, FORBES, MILLER of Florida, WILSON of South Carolina, CONAWAY, HUNTER, and COFFMAN of Colorado.

The message further announced that pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 4412, and the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development: Mr. LUJÁN of New Mexico.