

we remember and reflect on the history and contributions African Americans have made.

Our American identity is tied to the music of outstanding artists like Sarah Vaughan and Duke Ellington, the literary work of authors like Maya Angelou and Langston Hughes, the groundbreaking accomplishments of athletes like Jackie Robinson and Jackie Joyner-Kersey, and the discoveries and inspiration of scientists like Benjamin Banneker and Mae Jemison. Thanks to the inventions of African Americans, we now ride on elevators, preserve food in refrigerators and travel safely on the road with traffic lights.

The contributions of these and millions more Black Americans are part of the very fabric of our Nation.

It is in the spirit of these brave citizens, and in recognition that their remarkable accomplishments are that much more remarkable for having overcome a history of racial discrimination, that we must continue to forge ahead on the path of justice and equality. We have come a long way in Oregon and in America—but there is far more to be done.

As the Urban League of Portland recently pointed out in their commissioned “State of Black Oregon” report: 30 percent of Black Oregonians are living in poverty—5 percent higher than the national average; only 34 percent of Black Oregonians own their own homes—12 percent lower than the national average; and the unemployment rate of Black Oregonians is nearly double the State unemployment rate.

These statistics are troubling and are another reminder that we must do much more to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to lead a thriving, productive life free of institutional barriers and policies that prevent success. We must continue to remember the struggle so many have endured to push equity, fairness and justice forward. And we must ensure that our education system is the best in the world, and that our families have access to workforce and training opportunities that lead to living-wage jobs.

Today, we honor the brave citizens who have made my State, our country and our world better. Today, we celebrate and reflect—but tomorrow, we must get back to work to truly reach equity.

RECOGNIZING U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND TEAM IN HAITI

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I rise today to extend my gratitude to GEN Douglas M. Fraser, Commander, and the men and women serving within the U.S. Southern Command, SOUTHCOM, for what was a true act of heroism. Certainly, all the members of America’s great military exemplify a “can do” spirit and selfless service to our Nation each and every day. And, as we all know full well, our military has ever-changing missions; yet the men and women of our armed serv-

ices demonstrate time and again their ability to adapt and perform, as is the case with America’s most recent humanitarian mission in Haiti.

Recently, staff from Creighton University in my home State of Nebraska sought emergency assistance for some critical patients in Jimani, Haiti. The Creighton medical team on the ground there needed a rapid response for these Haitian patients, but they were unable to connect with any support agencies in the region to get the immediate attention this situation required.

The team at SOUTHCOM quickly saved the day, airlifting these critically injured patients from Jimani to Milot, Haiti, where they could be properly treated. The entire American and international teams in Haiti have saved an untold and incalculable number of lives since the devastating earthquake, but I would be remiss if I did not highlight the incredible effort by the men and women of SOUTHCOM. The servicemembers under General Fraser’s command managed to evacuate 37 patients and their families over the course of January 31 and February 1, 2010; and these individuals will be forever grateful to the men and women of America’s military for saving their lives.

All Americans should recognize this valiant effort by the members of SOUTHCOM. General Fraser showed great leadership in overseeing this mission, and the courageous service of the men and women at SOUTHCOM has the gratitude of not only the medical team and others from Creighton University, but the people of Haiti as well. You are all a credit to our Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING CHICK-FIL-A

• Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I wish to honor in the RECORD of the Senate a great Georgia company, Chick-fil-A, Inc., and a great Georgian, its founder S. Truett Cathy.

Last May, at age 88, Truett Cathy, founder and active CEO of Chick-fil-A, celebrated 63 years in the restaurant business. In 1946, he opened his first restaurant, The Dwarf Grill, in Hapeville, GA. In December, Chick-fil-A, which Mr. Cathy founded in 1967, reached the \$3 billion mark in system-wide sales and posted its 42nd-consecutive annual sales increase since the company’s inception.

While our economy was facing difficult times, the Cathy family and president and COO, Dan T. Cathy, was prepared and committed to carrying on a family tradition. The Chick-fil-A model of slow and steady growth that has proven so successful in the past has paid off during these tough economic times.

The chain maintained its pace for new restaurant openings by opening 83 new restaurants across the country in 2009, creating approximately 4,200 new

jobs. In addition, Chick-fil-A continued its reinvestment in its existing restaurant infrastructure by remodeling or expanding 60 restaurants across the chain. Despite the uncertain economy, Chick-fil-A continues to be on track to honor the commitment Truett Cathy and his family made at the end of 2006 to eliminate all company debt by 2012.

I am also proud to say that this Georgia-based company also continues its strong commitment to education. In August 2009, Truett Cathy awarded the 25,000th Chick-fil-A Leadership Scholarship since creating the program in 1973. To date, the leadership scholarship program has awarded more than \$25 million in financial assistance to more than 25,000 Chick-fil-A restaurant team members who have attended 2,300-plus educational institutions throughout the country. In 2009 alone, Chick-fil-A awarded \$1.4 million in scholarships to 1,425 Chick-fil-A team members across the country.

Congratulations, Chick-fil-A, and best wishes to Truett Cathy and the entire Cathy family for their ongoing success in Georgia and throughout the country.●

RECOGNIZING CHAPEL HILL FLORAL

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, this Sunday, we celebrate Valentine’s Day, when couples across the world take a moment to slow down and show each other their appreciation and love. Along with “Be My Valentine” cards and boxes of chocolate, one of the symbols most connected with this special day is a beautiful bouquet of red roses. With that in mind, I wish to recognize a small florist in my home State of Maine that continually provides customers with quality flowers and gifts—and at this time of year, makes Valentine’s Day a sweet event.

Chapel Hill Floral, a small flower shop in Bangor, opened its doors on the corner of West Broadway and Hammond Street in October of 2000. The full service florist sells a wide variety of floral arrangements for all occasions, from weddings to birthdays to everyday moments. Additionally, Chapel Hill stocks a number of plants, as well as baskets and hangers for them. The store also sells a vast array of gifts to complement any floral selection, including Boyd’s bears, local wines from nearby Winterport Winery, and delicious staples from Maine-based Stone-wall Kitchen.

A name synonymous with quality in the Bangor region, Chapel Hill has three Maine master floral designers on staff. This designation was established in 2003 for those passing a wide-ranging course in floral mechanics and techniques offered by the Maine State Florists’ and Growers’ Association. Indeed, Chapel Hill’s dedication to excellence and its employees’ sense of pride in their work has led to a truly satisfied clientele.