

and so fitting to have someone who loves the history. Thank you, Lois, and thank you for that lovely introduction and thank you for this welcome.

I wanted to say especially thank you to the Washington-on-the-Brazos Association and all of the associations that keep our Texas history alive. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts because we are passing it through the generations because of you. Thank you all.

You know it is so special that you have honored all of us, the descendants, on the 175th anniversary, because those 59 brave men did not just come in and sign a paper.

They took great risk. They put their lives, their treasures, and the lives of their families on the line to do it. And sometimes, 175 years later, sometimes we don't think about the risk that they were willing to take.

They were actually elected as delegates by their peers in the little towns throughout Texas because every one of those people wanted to govern themselves.

In Texas, independence is not merely a state of being free from tyranny; it is a spirit instilled within us, anchored in our knowledge that we are part of something truly unique.

Across the nation, Texans have earned the reputation for being exceptionally proud—a little too much, some people think! But Texans earned it; they earned it 175 years ago, and we have passed it from generation to generation.

We are the only state that came in to our nation as a nation, and with that distinction comes a vivid history and a storied past unlike any other.

What some interpret as a brazen stubbornness—we know to be a fierce and steadfast will to live in freedom.

When that will was tested, Texans rose up and rebelled against oppression.

In the time leading up to the Texas Revolution, colonists were living under the centralized power of the Mexican government. Its steel grip on trade, religion, and heavy taxation, conflicted with the yearning for independence that drew the early American settlers to Texas.

The accounts of our revolution have become some of the most dramatic stories of patriotism in both Texas and American history.

We remember the sacrifice of Colonel William Barret Travis, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and the 189 men who died bravely defending the Alamo against Santa Anna and his thousands of trained Mexican troops.

Outnumbered by more than 10 to one, for 13 days of glory, the Alamo defenders bought critical time for General Sam Houston, knowing they would never leave the mission alive.

Had they not laid down their lives in that seminal battle, Sam Houston's victory at San Jacinto just two months later would never have been possible. Texas' freedom might not have been won.

Those who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence, where we stand today, were akin to those who signed the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. They were the leaders of this area. They risked their lives and those of their family when they put pen to paper.

And the 59 Texans who are so ably represented here today were considered traitors to Mexico as they used their voices, their professions, and positions of influence to wage critical battles in the revolution.

My great-great-grandfather, Charles Taylor, was one of these patriots whose principles and will to survive were tested.

In 1836, he was land commissioner in East Texas, responsible for issuing titles and collecting taxes. He served as alcalde, essentially the mayor, of Nacogdoches Territory.

This position of course made him a representative of the government of Mexico, but he was witnessing firsthand the widening rift between Texans and Mexico's emerging autocracy.

As the movement for independence from Mexico began to grow, he sided, of course, with Texas in the dispute with the central government over taxation.

Secretary of War Thomas Rusk asked Taylor to allow the fees entrusted to him to be used to purchase weapons for the Texas army.

He was technically obligated to pass the money to Mexico, so Rusk's request presented him with an ethical dilemma.

But Taylor ultimately agreed, believing that the people who paid the taxes wanted and deserved freedom to govern themselves.

With this money and every penny they could collect all over Texas from the towns everywhere, they were armed for the battle. But remember they had no money for uniforms, they were not formally trained. What they did have was the will to fight for something greater than themselves.

As he prepared his men for the final stand in the fight for freedom at San Jacinto, these were Sam Houston's words, "We view ourselves on the eve of battle. We are nerved for the contest, and must conquer or perish. It is vain to look for present aid: for it is not there. We must now act or abandon all hope! Rally to the standard, and be no longer the scoff of mercenary tongues! Be men, be free men, that your children may bless their father's name."

After the victory at the battle of San Jacinto and Santa Anna's surrender, Secretary of War Rusk wrote the report. I love these words. His description:

"The sun was sinking in the horizon as the battle commenced; but at the close of the conflict, the sun of liberty and independence rose in Texas, never, it is hoped, to be obscured by the clouds of despotism . . . The unerring aim and irresistible energy of the Texas army could not be withstood. It was freemen fighting against the minions of tyranny and the results proved the inequality of such a contest."

I now want to bring attention to another contingent of brave Texans whose involvement in the revolution was significant, but sometimes overlooked: the women. They struggled to keep their families together, or even alive.

One of our state's first historians, Mary Austin Holley, who was the cousin of Stephen F. Austin, chronicled the daring, enterprising nature of Texas' women settlers.

She wrote that these hardy women hunted with their husbands and rode long distances on horseback to attend social events with their ball gowns stuffed in their saddlebags.

During the Texas Revolution, their vigor and free-spiritedness translated to steadfast courage and unshakeable resolve to survive and protect their families in the face of extreme trial.

Thomas Rusk himself wrote, "The men of Texas deserved much credit, but more was due the women. Armed men facing a foe could not but be brave; but the women, with their little children around them, without means of defense or power to resist, faced danger and death with unflinching courage."

The Runaway Scrape of 1836 swept every family in Central and East Texas. My great-great-grandmother, Anna Maria Taylor, was one of the thousands of refugees fleeing eastward from the Mexican advance and the threat of Indian raids.

With her husband, Charles Taylor, attending the convention of delegates right here, Anna Maria, like many of your great-great-grandmothers struggled to escape on foot.

Anna Maria fought to feed her four children. Despite widespread food shortages, she

did everything she could to shield them from seasonal rains and disease.

Tragically, like so many mothers of the time, she lost every one of her four children.

But the trials of the revolution were not the final chapters in their lives.

After the War of Independence ended, Anna Maria and Charles went right back to Nacogdoches, and she bore nine more children.

The families of all of you here today, as descendants, recovered and rebuilt their lives after independence was won, and they started building Texas at the same time.

I inherited Thomas Rusk's world atlas dated 1850 which is now in my office reception room in Washington, DC.

According to the atlas, in 1850, Texas had just over 212,500 people. And we learned just last week that our state's population today is over 25 million.

I think the 59 signers of the Declaration of Independence would be awestruck by this staggering figure. Oh, how far we've come!

When I finish my term, I will bring Thomas Rusk's world atlas back to its rightful home in Texas, to Stephen F. Austin University, which is built on land he owned. There it will be on display for future generations to see.

In order to secure our bright future, we must preserve our rich history.

Each year on March 2, I read William Barret Travis' letter from the Alamo, because it is so stirring and so amazingly brave.

The late Senator John Tower started the tradition of reading it every single year. Senator Phil Gramm continued it, and I took it when Phil retired.

Colonel Travis wrote in that letter, "I shall never surrender or retreat." And displaying the ultimate courage in the face of certain demise, he wrote, "I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country—Victory or Death."

Steadfast to the end and independent to the core—that is the essence of Texas.

Finally . . . the cliff notes to my speech today are:

That we, the descendants of these great 59 men and their wives and all of those who followed, and all of those in these associations who have no descendants but know that Texas is special, it is important that every generation of Texas pause to remember the patriots of the Texas revolution:

Each soldier who gave his life at the Alamo, Goliad, and San Jacinto;

The 59 men who met at Washington-on-the-Brazos, putting their lives in danger by signing that Declaration of Independence and becoming heroes for a cause;

And the bravery of the women who gave up an easier life in the East to join the struggle to make Texas the marvelous place that it is today.

It is our challenge to pass their spirit to our children and our grandchildren. This gathering today and the annual celebration that we have of Texas Independence Day do just that.

Thank you! And God bless Texas!

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I yield the floor.

REMEMBERING KATE IRELAND

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life, legacy and extraordinary accomplishments of Ms. Kate Ireland, who passed away peacefully at her home at Foshalee Plantation in northern Florida on February 15, 2011. She was 80. Kate was a prime example of a woman who gave back to

her community through her passion for public service, conservation efforts, and volunteerism. Her tenacious spirit and determination made her one of the most inspiring and hardworking people I have ever had the privilege of knowing, and I am honored to have called her my friend.

Coming from a successful family with a rich tradition of philanthropy and public service, Kate's interest in volunteerism and conservation began at an early age. Her parents, the late Robert and Margaret Ireland, were also avid philanthropists and conservationists who taught Kate to admire and appreciate the beauty of life around her. It was this sense of appreciation that inspired her to hold a lifelong dedication to philanthropy of the arts, education, and health care.

After graduating from St. Timothy's in Baltimore and attending Vassar College for a year, Kate realized that she had another calling in life to fulfill. So, 20-year-old Kate packed her bags and moved to the Commonwealth to volunteer at the Frontier School of Midwifery and Family Nursing, a nursing service to the underserved families of the remote regions around the southeastern Kentucky town of Hyden. Continuing the work of her grandmother and sister, who also volunteered there, Kate served as a courier by looking after the horses and jeeps used by the nurse midwives, tending to the milk cows and pigs that were kept by Frontier, and packing supplies for the nurses for their rounds.

Even early on, Kate's fearless leadership was recognized by her Frontier mentors, as many people looked to her to make sure things got done and done correctly. This "dogged determination," as many who knew her described it, is what moved her to volunteer for the position of director of volunteers for 14 years. Kate's no-nonsense, professional demeanor eventually led her to collect numerous other titles, such as chairman of the Development Committee, vice chairman of the board, and ultimately the title of national chairman of the Board of Governors in 1975, a position she held for 17 years. Respectfully, Kate remains the board's honorary chairman.

Although Kate was an avid traveler with residences in Georgia, Maine and Florida, she remained a guiding force in the Commonwealth for advancements in education and health care for nearly six decades. Kate lent her expertise, advice, hard work and financial support to FNS as well as Hyden Citizens Bank, the Kentucky River Area Development District in which she was chairman, and Berea College, where she was also chairman and trustee.

Kate once said that going to Kentucky had always been in the cards for her. Well, she couldn't have been more right. Because of her generosity and dedication, countless Kentuckians have benefited from education and training programs that she loyally supported and established, such as the Commu-

nity-Based Nurse-Midwifery Education Program, The Mary Breckinridge Chair to support the faculty of Frontier, and the Kate Ireland and Kitty Ernst Scholarships which are awarded to students annually. She was an upstanding woman who dedicated most of her life to serving others. Her impressive accomplishments and pleasant manner left a wide-reaching legacy that forever changed her community, and there is no doubt that the Commonwealth is poorer for her loss. My thoughts go out to her sister, Louise; her dear friend Anne Cundle; and many other friends and family. The Leslie County News recently published an article about Kate and the legacy she left behind. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

A LIFETIME SUPPORTER OF FRONTIER, KATE IRELAND LEAVES A LASTING LEGACY

Miss Kate Ireland, a lifelong philanthropist and a guiding force of the Frontier Nursing Service, passed away on Feb. 15, 2011, at her home in northern Florida. Miss Ireland devoted her life to public service, and her wide-reaching legacy includes her work on behalf of the Frontier Nursing Service and the Frontier School of Midwifery and Family Nursing in Hyden.

Miss Ireland was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1930 into a family with a tradition of supporting the vision of Mary Breckinridge. Her grandmother was a donor from the beginning of the City Committees established to support the demonstration of Frontier's nursing service to the underserved families living in the remote regions of Southeastern Kentucky. Her mother was Chairman of the Cleveland Committee. Kate's sister served as a courier in 1938.

Miss Ireland served as courier during the summers of 1951-1954 and as a part-time courier from 1959-1960. In her role as a courier, Kate looked after the horses and jeeps used by the FNS nurse-midwives. She also tended to milk cows and pigs kept by FNS and packed supplies for the nurses for their rounds. Mrs. Breckinridge recognized Kate as a leader, and many people looked to her to get things done. She volunteered as Director of Volunteers for FNS from 1961-1975. For nearly six decades, Miss Ireland lent her expertise, advice, hard work and financial support to help FNS provide healthcare in Leslie County and educate nurse-midwives and nurse practitioners across the globe. In Miss Ireland's biography by David Treadwell, "Full Speed Ahead: with a Twinkle in Her Eye," Kate says of her calling to Frontier that "going to Kentucky had always been in the cards for me."

She was well-known in the Leslie County community. Miss Ireland, a prominent member of Cleveland society, felt passionately about her work in Leslie County. Upon returning there in the early '60s, Miss Ireland built a beautiful home called Willow Bend overlooking Hurricane Creek and the Middle Fork. Although a world traveler with residences in Georgia and Maine, while serving the people of Leslie County, Miss Ireland primarily resided at her home in the community of Wendover with her lifelong friend and companion, Anne Cundle, a former FNS nurse-midwife.

While living in Kentucky, Miss Ireland became involved in local interests such as the LKLP and Hyden Citizens Bank and served as Chairman of the Kentucky River Area De-

velopment District and Trustee and Chairman of Berea College.

In 1963, in recognition of her strong leadership skills, Miss Ireland was elected to the FNS Board of Governors and served in various capacities on the Board until her death. She was Chairman of the Development Committee in 1967; Vice Chairman of the Board in 1968; and National Chairman of the Board of Governors in 1975, a post she held until 1992. In 1997 she was named National Honorary Chairman.

"She was a great mentor and a very determined and forceful woman who had the gift of convincing others to agree to support her in whatever project she was interested in," said Jane Leigh Powell, Chairman of the FNS Board of Governors and a friend of Miss Ireland's for nearly 50 years. "She maintained her interest in Leslie County after moving to Florida and continued to be a very loyal supporter of the FNS."

One example of Kate Ireland's ability to see the potential for Mary Breckinridge's vision for nursing and midwifery was her support for the creation of the Community-Based Nurse-Midwifery Education Program (CNEP). "We clearly would not have the successful, distance education programs that we have today without the support of Kate Ireland," reports Susan Stone, President and Dean of the Frontier School of Midwifery and Family Nursing.

Miss Ireland was better able than many to see that such a program could take the Frontier model of care out to the "wide neighborhoods" of mankind, which it is successfully doing as it prepares thousands of nurse-midwives and nurse practitioners to care for families in rural and underserved areas across the United States and abroad. Her support of distance education continued when, with Mary Breckinridge's cousin, Marvin Breckinridge Patterson, she established the first endowed Chair of Midwifery in the United States, The Mary Breckinridge Chair, to support faculty at the Frontier School. For support of students, she established and endowed the Kate Ireland and Kitty Ernst Scholarships to be awarded to students annually. Her footprints on the future of Frontier School continue to make a lasting impact on faculty and students alike.

In lieu of flowers, Miss Ireland requested donations be made to one of several named organizations or to a charity of your choice. There are several ways to give to Frontier in honor of Miss Ireland:

ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE PROGRAM

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I strongly oppose a provision included in the FAA Air Transportation Modernization and Safety Improvement Act that would eliminate the Essential Air Service Program at those airports boarding 10 passengers or less per day. Essential Air Service, EAS, truly is essential to the communities of Alliance, Chadron and McCook in my home State of Nebraska being impacted by this provision. In all, there are 40 rural airports in several States across the country which would no longer be a part of the EAS Program if this provision is included in any piece of legislation signed into law.

The adoption of this amendment to the FAA bill is bad for Nebraska and bad for rural America. The communities and surrounding areas being served by these airports use them as