

from the sanctuary in time for the 8:30 service. And, once again, he made sure that all six church fire extinguishers were distributed discretely to volunteer firefighters before that first Christmas Eve service, since it would end with the congregation—including the children—raising and lowering lit candles while we all sang “Silent Night.”

But despite the borderline bedlam that can mark this time of the year for us all, he tries not to lose sight of the blessings that come with that chaos. “What is most special for me every Sunday, but even more as we approach Christmas and Easter, is the realization that I get to speak the good news to people. Christian faith isn’t about rules and regulations, it is about our relationship with a God who loves us enough to choose to be with us.”

Indeed. So, while I remain impressed as heck with what Santa Claus and his reindeer just pulled off, I am mighty grateful as well for the work of David Wood and his peers.

Merry Christmas. Happy Hanukkah. Peace.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING ELIOT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today, I commend Eliot Elementary School of Eliot, ME, on being named a 2011 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. This prestigious recognition of high accomplishment was bestowed by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

Created in 1982, the Blue Ribbon Schools Award is considered the highest honor an American school can obtain. Schools singled out for this national recognition reflect the goals of our Nation’s education reforms for high standards and accountability. Specifically, the Blue Ribbon Schools Program is designed to honor public and private schools that are either academically superior in their States or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

This award recognizes that Eliot Elementary students achieve at the highest level academically. Eliot Elementary School is a top-performing school on State-required assessments, and staff at the school use assessments throughout the academic year as a tool for improving and customizing instruction. The school works closely with families to forge a strong school community where students are connected and encouraged to pursue their interests.

I applaud not only the students but also the administrators, teachers, staff, and parents of Eliot Elementary School. Together, they are succeeding in their mission to generate excitement and momentum for learning. They are making a difference in the lives of their students, helping them reach their full potential as independent, responsible learners and citizens.

I am pleased that the U.S. Department of Education has selected Eliot Elementary School for this well-deserved honor, and I congratulate the communities of Eliot and South Ber-

wick for this outstanding achievement.●

EVERYBODY WINS!

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize two individuals for their extraordinary service to the Everybody Wins! Program in Iowa.

As many of my colleagues know, Everybody Wins! is a literacy and mentoring program for elementary school students. The program gives adults the opportunity to spend one lunch hour a week reading with a child in a public school.

Fourteen years ago, Senator Jim Jeffords recruited me to join him as a volunteer for the Everybody Wins! Program in Washington, D.C. Since then, I have been an Everybody Wins! volunteer at Brent Elementary School in Washington D.C. I have seen the tremendous impact this program has both on the adult volunteers and their young student partners.

I was very happy when Everybody Wins! was launched in my home State of Iowa in 2002. Two people I want to recognize today joined Everybody Wins! as volunteer readers and founding board members in 2003. Both of them retired in the last year after contributing to the solid foundation on which the Iowa program rests today.

Mary Ann Nielsen joined the board of Everybody Wins! Iowa in the spring of 2003. She continued her service, including as president of the board, until May of 2011. Her work on the board included serving on three executive director search committees, as well as on the personnel and executive committees.

Amy Elbert also joined the board in the spring of 2003, and continued her service until May of 2011. She devoted substantial time and energy to fundraising, two executive director search committees, as secretary of the board, and as chair of the outreach committee. Amy also has enjoyed reading relationships through the program for the past 4 years.

For their commitment to our youth, to literacy, and their long-time contributions to Everybody Wins! Iowa, I extend my sincere thanks to Mary Ann and Amy and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.●

REED COLLEGE

• Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, with great pride I wish to congratulate Reed College in Portland, OR, on its 100 years of delivering excellent higher education. Reed College has consistently demonstrated its devotion to academia and to developing the intellectual spirit of its students through demanding curricula, insightful research and stimulating classroom conversation. I am certain that the next century will prove to be as fruitful as the last for Reed and its students and that the strong academic tradition will continue to thrive in the Eastmoreland neighborhood of Portland.

Reed’s story is much like the city of Portland’s. The founders of Reed wanted to approach higher education differently. They wanted to focus on creating leaders who think outside the box and who know that the answers of the past are not necessarily the answers of the future. Reed has put an emphasis on the progress of the individual student, emphasizing intellectual development over the pursuit of grades.

Colleges and universities like Reed allow people to continue their pursuit of knowledge, to debate problems and to develop ideas. Higher education is also a driving force behind social mobility and has broken down divisions of race, religion, gender and socio-economic class. Reed College embraces this mission, as reflected in the small class sizes filled with diverse students.

One hundred years of commitment to liberal arts education has produced 31 Rhodes Scholars, a great number of Fulbright grant recipients and countless well-educated members of the Oregon community and our Nation. To Colin Diver, the President of Reed College, and to the faculty and students of Reed: congratulations on a century of academic excellence.●

REMEMBERING JUDGE LIONEL “RED” NOONAN

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I was saddened over the holidays to learn of the death of a good man and friend, Judge Lionel “Red” Noonan of Mobile, AL, at the age of 86. Judge Noonan was a wonderful man. He knew it was all about service to others, and the courtesy, ease, and empathy he displayed to all he came upon was noticed and appreciated and remembered. Many think good politicians are the smooth folks, always ready with the right words, always thinking, always plotting, but Judge Noonan was a great politician because he served his constituents with grace and it came back to him in respect and in votes.

As a practicing lawyer in probate court, he always treated me the way he treated everyone. I was a rock-ribbed young Republican and he a loyal Democrat, yet I couldn’t have been more fairly treated by him. I had always heard, from my Republican friends, what a good man he was. As I have gotten older, I have come to see that in a place such as Mobile, where people really know one another, those who have good reputations are invariably good people. Judge Noonan’s good reputation was justly earned over a lifetime of honest dealing.

The Republicans were always hoping that he would switch parties and join them. That is in itself a high compliment to be courted by two parties. But to the Democrats he remained true.

Judge Noonan retired in 2001 after serving 18 years as the Mobile County probate judge. Prior to that he had served 8 years in the Alabama State