

so juvenile court judges don't receive the publicity some of their colleagues receive.

John Rogers loved juvenile court. He spent 21 years as a judge there and eventually became the supervising judge. To the often-complicated cases involving minors, Judge Rogers strove to bring wisdom, compassion, and justice.

Gwen Rogers has a stack of letters from men and women who appeared before Judge Rogers as youths and later wrote him letters thanking him for giving them a second chance. There was one letter in particular that he kept close and read several times. It was from a man who appeared before Judge Rogers on three different occasions. On his third court appearance, Judge Rogers said: "I could send you to juvenile detention and you would deserve it. But I still see a glimmer of hope in you, so I am sending you to Boystown." He made it clear to the young man that this was his last chance.

Years later that boy—now a grown man—wrote to him and said he finished at Boys Town, went on to graduate from college, became a minister, and founded a church in the Presiding Officer's home State of Indiana.

Judge Rogers was the sort of man who became a father to many young men who needed someone to look up to. The young man he really poured his hopes and dreams into was his own son John Rogers, Jr. When John Jr. was 12 years old, his parents invested in some stock for him. Every birthday and Christmas after that, instead of toys John Jr. received stock certificates. At the age of 16, he got his first summer job—that was a family rule. Judge Rogers saved every dime he could in order to send his son to the best school. Eventually John Rogers, Jr. graduated from Princeton University. He would go on to found Ariel Capital Management, now called Ariel Investments, the first African-American-owned asset management company in America.

In 2007, the Tuskegee Airmen were honored right here in the U.S. Capitol with a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor our Nation can bestow. The Tuskegee Airmen are the largest group ever to receive the medal. About 300 of the airmen crowded into the Capitol Rotunda on that cold March day to receive their medals. What an incredible sight. Many wore red jackets, a symbol of their Red-Tailed Angels reputation.

Afterwards, I was honored to host a reception in my Capitol office for the 11 Tuskegee Airmen from my home State of Illinois. One of them was John Rogers. Also joining us for that little reception was my colleague at the time, Senator Barack Obama. What a moment that was to see the arc of history and justice.

Five years later, President Barack Obama invited Judge Rogers and 14 other surviving Tuskegee Airmen to the White House for a screening of

"Red Tails," a George Lucas film about the historic flyers. Talk about the arc of history—the first African-American President inviting the first African-American aviators to the White House.

Judge Rogers, this man whose courage helped to break the color barrier in America's military, first knew Barack Obama as a promising young community organizer who was dating Michelle Robinson. The Rogers and Robinson families go back a long, long way. When John Rogers, Jr. was captain of Princeton's basketball team, he recruited Craig Robinson, Michelle's brother, to play for Princeton. Craig Robinson would later help persuade his younger sister to attend Princeton. There they were all those years later, Judge Rogers, President and Mrs. Obama, together in the White House watching a Hollywood film about the Tuskegee Airmen.

Judge Rogers' granddaughter Victoria said her grandfather actually watched the film three different times. Every time he moved his hands as though he were flying. She said, "He said he could remember the tension."

A while back Judge Rogers told a reporter: "I hope there are planes in heaven so I can fly, because you know how much I love to fly."

Well, Judge, I hope there are planes there too for your sake, and I hope you are sitting in first class or in the cockpit where you belong. You earned it.

In closing, Loretta and I and our family extend our sincere condolences again to Judge Rogers, his beloved wife Gwen, his son John, Jr., his granddaughter Victoria, to the rest of the Rogers family, to Judge Rogers' many friends, and all of those whose lives he touched and enriched.

That gathering in that Rockefeller Chapel was such an outstanding turnout of people in Chicago who wanted to pay tribute to the great man John Rogers, Sr. He will be dearly missed.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

U.S.-CHINA SISTER CITY PROGRAM

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the Sister City programs in Ohio. The Sister Cities International program was created by President Eisenhower in 1956 with the intent of fostering peace and prosperity through cultural exchanges that promote appreciation through mutual experience and understanding.

Through the years, relationships have been formed and strengthened through "citizen diplomacy" and person-to-person exchanges between U.S. and international cities. These educational, informational, and cultural

exchanges have not only created important diplomatic, economic and trade relationships, but they have also formed lasting personal bonds between individuals and cities.

The Sister City programs have positively impacted many cities throughout the United States, but today I would like to specifically recognize the 2014 U.S.-China Sister City Award recipients in my home State of Ohio. The State of Ohio was one of four recipients in the country for the Longest Relationship Award for its relationship that began in 1979 with the Hubei Province. Cincinnati was one of four programs in our Nation to be recognized as a Best Overall U.S.-China Sister City program in 2014. This strong relationship between Cincinnati and its Chinese Sister City Liuzhou in the Guangxi Province has existed since 1988. I was honored to be one of the original board members of this special Sister City relationship. In addition, the Columbus Sister City program was one of only three U.S.-China Sister City programs in the country to win a Sustainable Development Award. The relationship between Columbus and its Chinese Sister City, Hefei in the Anhui Province also began in 1988.

The U.S.-China Sister City programs in Ohio have been successful in forming relationships that mutually benefit the partnering communities by building global cooperation at the municipal level, promoting cultural understanding, and encouraging economic development. Some of the cultural exchanges made possible through these programs in Ohio include educational student and teacher exchanges, home stays, summer language camp exchanges, art exchanges, and science and medical exchanges.

The participants in these programs have demonstrated a commitment to enrich their communities culturally and economically, and I am inspired by the achievements that have been made in Ohio. I would like to congratulate the Ohio Sister City programs on being 2014 U.S.-China Sister City award recipients.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

VERMONT ESSAY WINNERS

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD winning essays written by Vermont High School students as part of the Fourth Annual State of the Union Essay contest conducted by my office.

The essays follow:

Alexina Federhen, Mount Anthony Union High School, Grade 11 (Winner)

A HOUSE DIVIDED

2013 was a difficult year for America. Nature brought death and disaster by fire, wind, and water; four prominent banks used unethical methods to deprive Americans of their homes; numerous individuals, businesses, and the city of Detroit hit financial rock bottom; and shootings in our schools