

Mr. Fugate's work on the ocean SAMP and Northeast Regional Planning Body has placed Rhode Island at the forefront of ocean planning and offshore wind development. He is a leader with a passion and commitment to protecting ocean and coastal resources. His technical expertise, ability to foster good working relationships with key stakeholders, and talent for finding solutions within the existing regulatory framework are a few of the many reasons I wish today to recognize him.

TRIBUTE TO CURT SPALDING

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a notable Rhode Islander. Curt Spalding, the outgoing Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's region 1, is retiring this year. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated a deep commitment to protecting our environment.

The iconic waters of New England are part of what make this region a very special place to live. Since taking the helm of EPA region 1 in 2009, Administrator Spalding has worked to bolster coastal resilience, clean our lakes and rivers, and improve New England communities through innovation and science. Among his priorities was renewing the region's focus on bettering stormwater pollution control, a particular concern for Rhode Island's coastal communities as they prepare for sea level rise and increased rainfall. His focus on stakeholder engagement led to EPA's first-ever, real-time water quality reporting tool, which relies on New England citizen scientists, professional researchers, and a myriad of other groups for data and outreach.

Administrator Spalding has routinely been a leader identifying innovative and cooperative solutions to difficult problems. He worked with Senator REED and me to establish the Southeastern New England Coastal Watershed Restoration Program, SNEP. SNEP, a collaboration between government agencies, researchers, and non-governmental organizations, works to protect and restore coastal watersheds by addressing the excess nutrients and other pollutants that undermine water quality in the region. So far SNEP has made available over \$12 million to improve coastal water quality, restore coastal ecosystems, and address nutrient pollution.

Administrator Spalding has also championed programs to clean the waters of Cape Cod and restore Lake Champlain, and his work in Boston Harbor is another national success story, turning one of the most toxic harbors in the country in the 1980s into one of the cleanest urban beaches in the Nation today.

Prior to serving with region 1, Administrator Spalding was the executive director of Rhode Island's Save the Bay for nearly two decades. While executive director, he oversaw construction of

the Save the Bay Center at Fields Point in Providence, RI. The center, which won the Phoenix Award for brownfields redevelopment, transformed a former landfill into a landmark facility that provides classroom spaces for Save the Bay's educational programs and serves as a living example of the organization's approach to environmentally friendly shoreline development. Under his leadership, Save the Bay grew into a nationally recognized, 20,000-member environmental advocacy and education organization.

Administrator Spalding's passion for his work and the environment is obvious. His vision for a vibrant, resilient New England had shaped the great work of our region's environmental and coastal communities for the last three decades. I hope during his retirement Administrator Spalding finds the time to enjoy some of the very areas he has spent a career protecting.

Curt, my friend, may the wind always be at your back.

REMEMBERING BENJAMIN CHARLES STEELE

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have the statement I previously delivered about the life of Benjamin Charles Steele printed in the RECORD.

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

BENJAMIN CHARLES STEELE, BILLINGS, MT

I rise to honor the life of an exceptional Montanan and a true American hero, Benjamin Charles Steele. He passed away on Sunday, September 25 in Billings, surrounded by his loving family. He was 98.

Ben was born on November 17, 1917, in Roundup, MT. He was 22 when he enlisted in the Army Air Corps in Missoula, MT, on September 9, 1940. A year later, assigned to serve in the Philippines, he arrived in-country and was promptly handed a rifle and told: "now you're in the infantry." Then, 10 hours after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invaded the Philippines. A few weeks later, Ben's unit was ordered to the Bataan Peninsula. Soon after, Ben's unit was captured, and he and his fellow soldiers began the infamous Bataan Death March. Ben was a prisoner for 3.5 years and was sent to Japan where he did hard labor in the Japanese mines. He was liberated once the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, with Ground Zero less than 80 miles from Ben's coal mine.

Ben was discharged from the U.S. Air Force on July 10, 1946. After beginning his art career drawing on the concrete floor of a prison in the Philippines, Ben pursued a formal art education. In 1955, he received a master's degree in art from the University of Denver and then taught art at Montana State University-Billings.

Up until his final days, Ben continued to paint, even while fighting his final battle in a nursing home in Billings. Ben Steele never requested any acclaim for his service, but he deserves recognition for his incredible courage in the face of daunting odds.

Ben's life story and legacy will be forever remembered across Montana, and on the west end of Billings, a middle school is currently being constructed that will bear his name.

Ben is survived by his wife, Shirley, and their two daughters, Julie Jorgenson and

Rosemarie Steele. He will be remembered by a grateful State and Nation for his brave service in our time of greatest need.

TRIBUTE TO MICHELE CRAIG

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I wish to recognize a dedicated public servant and advocate for the people of West Virginia, Michele P. Craig, on her retirement. Ms. Craig stepped down from her role as executive director of KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission and Region II Planning and Development Council on July 1. Her 30 years of service have benefited the State of West Virginia and the Huntington area.

Michelle received a bachelor's degree in economics from Queens College in Charlotte before completing graduate work at West Virginia University and American University. After beginning her career in Washington, she returned home after losing her father in the Marshall University plane crash of 1970 and began working in the family business. During this time, she also served in the West Virginia House of Delegates from 1973 through 1978.

In 1986, Michele went to work for Region II Planning and Development Council; within a year, she became executive director. During her tenure, Michele oversaw a staff that grew from 4 to 13 individuals, serving Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, and Wayne Counties. I have had the pleasure of working with Michele and her staff on numerous projects benefiting the citizens of West Virginia. Her wealth of knowledge, professional expertise, and poise were integral to these accomplishments. My staff and I will miss Michele as she moves on, but she has left behind a strong foundation for the future.

Aside from her role as executive director, Michele has served her community through several organizations, including the Prester Foundation, Ronald McDonald House, and Hospice of Huntington. She is also an avid reader, gardener, and world traveler. Michele is married to Thomas L. Craig, and together, they have three children.

I wish Michele all the best as she spends more time with her children and grandchildren, enjoying her favorite activities and continuing her philanthropic endeavors and service to the Huntington area. Throughout her career, she has made a positive difference in the lives of many West Virginians. It has been an honor working with her, and it is an honor to call her my friend and fellow West Virginian. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring her service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO WANDA DRAPER

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, a fellow Baltimorean and dear friend of mine, Wanda Queen Draper, is retiring today

from WBAL-TV, where she has worked for the past 25 years. In a sense, Wanda and I grew up together professionally in a city we both love so much. But Wanda is not the “retiring” type so she is becoming the executive director of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture, an important part of Baltimore’s history and culture that she helped to found.

Wanda joined the Hearst Corp. as a student correspondent at the Baltimore News American in 1968. She worked on the Sunday paper until 1973, when she graduated from the University of Maryland. Wanda spent the next 10 years as a reporter and local editor at the Baltimore Sun. She subsequently worked as an assignment manager and local show host at WJZ-TV, director of public affairs for the Governor’s office, and director of community affairs for the National Aquarium in Baltimore. In 1991, she joined WBAL-TV as public affairs manager and was ultimately promoted to director of programming and public affairs, making her responsible for all of the station’s programming.

Wanda has won numerous local and national awards over the years and has been cited by the National Association of Broadcasters for her outstanding achievements. In short, she has had a stellar career. But she is also very active in several community endeavors, and this is what I would like to highlight: her tireless dedication to the people of Baltimore, especially those who are less fortunate. Wanda serves on the boards of the WBAL Kids Campaign, St. Timothy’s School, the Brigrance Brigade Foundation, and Journey Home. The WBAL Kids Campaign is involved in many community events, the largest of which is the Coats for Kids program each fall. Wanda was able to partner with Burlington Coat Factory and has provided over 300,000 children with coats over the past 13 years. Over the last 3 years, with Wanda’s help, the Brigrance Brigade has provided services to more than 40,000 ALS survivors and has raised over \$1.5 million. The Journey Home campaign supports the mayor’s 10-year plan to end homelessness in Baltimore. Over the past 6 years, the campaign has assisted 2,000 people, and Wanda has helped to raise \$6 million. For the past 8 years, she has been active in the St. Vincent DePaul Empty Bowls program, which has helped to feed 440,000 people and raised more than \$2 million.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: “To laugh often and much; To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.”

By these measures, Wanda has been wildly successful. Wanda is married to Dr. Robert Draper and is surrounded by her wonderful family each and every day. But it seems that the residents of Baltimore are a part of her extended family, and she is determined that they will all “breathe easier” because of her efforts on their behalf. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in thanking Wanda Draper for her extraordinary professional and personal commitment to the people and city of Baltimore and congratulating her as she moves on to her next great endeavor.●

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF BALTIMORE GAS AND ELECTRIC

● Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Baltimore Gas and Electric, BGE, which celebrated its 200th anniversary earlier this year. BGE, headquartered in Baltimore, is Maryland’s largest natural gas and electric utility, delivering power to more than 1.25 million electric customers and more than 650,000 natural gas customers in central Maryland. BGE’s electric service territory is approximately 2,300 square miles, including Baltimore city and all or part of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George’s Counties. BGE’s gas service territory is approximately 800 square miles, including Baltimore city and all or part of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George’s Counties. The company employs approximately 3,200 people.

BGE was founded on June 17, 1816, and has the distinction of being the Nation’s first and oldest gas distribution company. BGE’s rich heritage is intertwined with the city of Baltimore, dating back to the days of acclaimed American portrait painter and museum keeper Rembrandt Peale when he lit the first gas lamps at his museum on Holiday Street, which made quite an impression. Peale envisioned lighting the streets of Baltimore and held an important gas lighting patent. With some business associates, he incorporated BGE, originally known as the Gas and Light Company of Baltimore. Baltimore’s first gas street lamps were lit on February 1817, which was 64 years before Baltimore’s first electric companies appeared in the city.

In 1906, the Consolidated Gas and Electric Light and Power Company was formed through a series of mergers, operating until 1955 when it was renamed Baltimore Gas and Electric; today it is proudly known as BGE and supports 10,000 direct and indirect jobs in Maryland and contributes almost \$4 billion to the region’s economy each year.

The company and its employees have a long history of investing in the community and continue to strengthen that commitment by supporting more than 260 nonprofit organizations each

year through charitable contributions and volunteer hours. The company also is a leader in promoting energy efficiency through a variety of means. I was proud to help secure a “smart grid” stimulus grant in 2009, which was instrumental in helping BGE install 2 million electric and gas smart meter devices throughout central Maryland. Today the company continues to help its customers take more control of their energy supply and management, and it will keep working with its customers and communities to promote clean energy resources while delivering energy in a safe, reliable, and clean manner.

I would like to ask my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating BGE on its 200th anniversary and thanking the dedicated employees, customers, businesses, and communities who helped BGE to achieve this milestone.●

TRIBUTE TO MASTER GUNNERY SERGEANT JULIUS D. SPAIN, SR.

● Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize MGySgt Julius D. Spain, Sr., U.S. Marine Corps, on the occasion of his retirement following 26 years of service in the Marine Corps.

A native of Conway, SC, Julius entered the Marine Corps in August 1990 as a recruit at Parris Island, SC. In the years after completing school there, Julius received several promotions, as well as orders to many assignments within the Marine Corps, including being deployed to combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2002 and reporting to the U.S. delegation to the North Military Committee, Joint Staff, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium, in 2004, where Julius provided administrative and operational support for the U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and the President of the United States.

In 2010, Julius was selected as one of two staff noncommissioned officers in the Marine Corps to participate in the 2011 Congressional Fellowship Program on Capitol Hill. I met Julius in January 2011, when he began a 12-month stint in my Senate office as my defense fellow. During that year, he assisted on numerous military issues and was an excellent representative of the Marine Corps. Julius also was selected for promotion to the rank of master gunnery sergeant during his time in my office.

Since leaving my Senate office, Julius has served as the senior enlisted legislative adviser for the Marine Corps Office of Legislative Affairs and later as a special senior enlisted detailee with the Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General. He will retire from this detailee position this month.

MGySgt Julius Spain is married to the former Adriana Contreras of Houston, TX, and she is a Marine Corps veteran herself. They have three children: Monique, 22; Julius, Jr., 21; and Leana, 17. I wish the entire Spain family fair