

in the Senate, he has always kept the best interests of Ohio at heart. I have been truly blessed to have had Mike provide me such tremendous professional service over the years.

As I have been blessed with Mike's service, he has been blessed even more so with a wonderful and loving family. To witness the love that Mike has for his wife Laurel and his son Will makes it evident that they are the most important priorities in his life, and to see them all together makes it easy to realize that God's love truly shines upon them.

Mike is an Ohioan to the core, and he has always considered it his distinct privilege to work on behalf of the people of his state of Ohio in an effort to improve government and make government work more efficiently, and for the benefit of all Ohioans. When serving the people of Ohio, Mike was the first to arrive in the morning and the last to leave at night, and it was a given that Mike was on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Today, though, Mike's responsibilities are focused a little more closer to home, and he and Laurel have decided to go back to their roots and raise Will in the Buckeye State. And while I am losing a valued member of my staff, I take great comfort in the knowledge that my friend Mike Dawson's service to the people of Ohio will continue. Mike has gone back to work for his former boss and my very dear friend, Senator MIKE DEWINE. I know that he will be successful in this new endeavor.

I consider myself a better person and a better public servant for having the opportunity to know Michael Dawson. He has been a loyal friend and a sage counselor whom I will truly miss.●

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM F.X. MCCONNELL

● Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a fellow Utahn, William F.X. McConnell of Salt Lake City, a remarkable man with a remarkable story. I am not sure that in this retelling I can do justice to his sacrifices or of those who fought along side of him during World War II's campaign for the Rhine River. But, I think my colleagues would be interested in this history and would like to join me in paying tribute to the bravery of these men.

In December 1944, Bill McConnell arrived in France and was assigned to the 168th Engineer Combat Battalion. Shortly thereafter, Bill McConnell and his battalion fought in the terrible Battle of the Bulge. His battalion paved the way for an allied victory by removing road blocks and tank traps, building bridges under fire, and other perilous assignments. But, these were not the most harrowing experiences to which McConnell was assigned. The worst was yet to come.

McConnell and his battalion were called to cross the Rhine River, an assault as dangerous as it was important. He was told that this would be a simple assault, with plenty of support provided. At 2:00 a.m. on March 26, 1945, he boarded a row boat to cross the Rhine River into Germany. During the crossing, a bank of lights on the German side of the river were suddenly turned on, spotlighting the American soldiers. German tracer bullets fell like deadly rain upon them. The promised support from the American side never came.

While rowing, McConnell was hit in the wrist. Bleeding profusely, he continued to row. Shortly thereafter, several tracer bullets ripped through his thigh and knee. Continuing to row, he was hit a third time by an unidentified object on the side of his face and head. This blow knocked him into the water where he was miraculously saved by an assault boat returning from the German shore. Still without cover, the occupants of the boat were forced to debark and trudge through an active sewer line in order to escape the German gunfire.

For this act of bravery, Bill McConnell was awarded a well-deserved Purple Heart. In addition, he has been honored with the American Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Distinguished Unit Citation, European Theater of Operations with four battle stars, and the Belgium Croix de Guerre (War Cross). These medals stand as a symbol of his dedication.

But, Bill McConnell's battle since the war has been to keep this military history alive. While the battle at Remagen and other locations during the war to defeat the Third Reich have been well-chronicled in books and on film, engagements such as the Rhine crossing are still unknown to many Americans.

Since the war, McConnell has worked tirelessly in support of veterans organizations. Shortly after returning from the war he worked as a national service officer with the Disabled American Veterans. For 25 years, he served in the Veterans Administration Adjudication Division, in positions including senior adjudicator, chairman of the rating board, and adjudication officer.

For more than 40 years, he has been the American Legion member in charge of placing U.S. flags on graves for Memorial Day. He has served as past state commander in Utah of the Disabled American Veterans. He is the founder of the Salt Lake City chapter and national service officer of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, where he volunteers to help veterans with their disability claims. Clearly, he is one who has helped many.

There are thousands of World War II veterans just like Bill McConnell, who fought courageously for freedom. But, William F.X. McConnell is one who happens to live in my home state. He

exemplifies the dedication of all American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines—past, present, and future—who have always been on watch to defend our country and its vital interests.

Today, I want to thank Bill McConnell for his service in uniform and for his service to our nation's veterans. This stand as his own monument. I am pleased to call the Senate's attention to his bravery in battle and to his many contributions to veterans.●

MR. LEONARD E. AND MRS. LOUISE A. PLACHTA DAY

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, November 11, 2000 is a very special day on the campus of Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, MI. The day has been proclaimed Mr. Leonard E. and Mrs. Louise A. Plachta Day, in honor of the former President and First Lady of the University. I rise today to recognize this occasion and to pay tribute to the magnificent couple being honored.

The couple arrived in Mt. Pleasant in 1972 when Mr. Plachta took a job as Professor of Accounting. He served as Assistant Dean of CMU's College of Business Administration from 1977 to 1979, when he took over the position of Dean. In January of 1992, he was appointed to serve as President of the University, and he served in this position until his retirement in July of 2000.

Mr. Plachta's 8-year tenure as President stands as one of the most productive stints in the history of the University. His financial restructuring of CMU has allowed it to remain one of the most affordable public universities in the State of Michigan. He initiated a number of programs to give students real-world experience to help prepare them for future employment, including developing a state-of-the-art Career Services Center and expanding internship opportunities for students.

He drew national attention for the Degree Partners Program, which is a guaranteed four-year degree agreement with students designed to save them money as well as get skilled professionals into the job market quickly. He also initiated one of the first leadership scholar programs in the country, a four-year educational protocol designed to help students develop ethical leadership skills they can apply in their professions.

Mr. Plachta oversaw significant upgrading of classrooms and facilities during his tenure. This included new, highly technological music and science buildings; new and renovated athletic facilities; and a pending Library and Information Services Center that will incorporate technology to link students with academic resources from around the world.

He also oversaw a complete reorganization of CMU's academic programs

in order to increase interdepartmental cooperation and draw attention to the University's strengths. This reorganization included a new College of Communication and Fine Arts, a new College of Health Professions, redefined science programs through a new College of Science and Technology, and a revamped College of Business Administration, College of Education and Human Services, and College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

One of the greatest accomplishments of his tenure, though, has been the leadership role CMU has taken in terms of the chartering of public school academies, charter schools. More than 17,000 K-12 students, approximately 50 percent of whom are minorities or at risk children, are enrolled in 59 CMU-licensed schools throughout the State of Michigan, with families on waiting lists at nearly every school. In addition, the national Charter Schools Development and Performance Institute, housed at CMU, had its grand opening earlier this year, on May 1, 2000.

Mrs. Plachta has also greatly contributed to the CMU community. For twelve years, she worked as a member of the clerical staff. She provided superior guidance and caring support to nontraditional students as the nontraditional student services liaison, which is a volunteer position. Her knowledge in this position came honestly, as she earned a master's degree herself as a nontraditional student. And, as First Lady, she has been a much-loved ambassador for CMU and an outstanding member of the Mount Pleasant community, volunteering with numerous organizations and strongly supporting adult literacy programs.

Central Michigan University stands where it does today, poised for success in the 21st Century, in large part due to the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Plachta. They have worked together to bring about positive change not only for the University, but also for the State of Michigan, on many different fronts, and I thank them for their extraordinary efforts. On behalf of the entire United States Senate, I congratulate Mr. Leonard E. and Louise A. Plachta on having a day designated in their honor, and I hope that they enjoy every minute of it. ●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:22 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 460. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that the mandatory separation age for Federal firefighters be made the same as the age that applies with respect to Federal law enforcement officers.

H.R. 2570. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to undertake a study regarding methods to commemorate the national significance of the United States roadways that comprise the Lincoln Highway, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3926. An act to amend the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor Act of 1984 to increase the amount authorized to be appropriated to the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor Commission.

H.R. 4187. An act to assist the establishment of an interpretive enter and museum in the vicinity of the Diamond Valley Lake in southern California to ensure the protection and interpretation of the paleontology discoveries made at the lake and to develop a trail system for the lake for use by pedestrians and nonmotorized vehicles.

H.R. 4281. An act to establish, wherever feasible, guidelines, recommendations, and regulations that promote the regulatory acceptance of new or revised scientifically valid toxicological tests that protect human and animal health and the environment while reducing, refining, or replacing animal tests and ensuring human safety and product effectiveness.

H.R. 4312. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the suitability and feasibility of establishing an Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area in the State of Connecticut and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4404. An act to permit the payment of medical expenses incurred by the United States Park Police in the performance of duty to be made directly by the National Park Service, to allow for waiver and indemnification in mutual law enforcement agreements between the National Park Service and a State or political subdivision when required by State law, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4493. An act to establish grants for drug treatment alternative to prison programs administered by State or local prosecutors.

H.R. 4521. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to authorize and provide funding for rehabilitation of the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park, to authorize funds for maintenance of utilities related to the Park, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4646. An act to designate certain National Forest System lands within the boundaries of the State of Virginia as wilderness areas.

H.R. 4965. An act to amend the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, 1930, to extend the time period during which persons may file a complaint alleging the preparation of false inspection certificates at Hunts Point Terminal Market, Bronx, New York.

H.R. 5016. An act to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 514 Express Center Drive in Chicago, Illinois, as the "J.T. Weeker Service Center."

H.R. 5041. An act to establish the boundaries and classification of a segment of the Missouri River in Montana under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

H.R. 5110. An act to designate the United States courthouse located at 3470 12th Street in Riverside, California, as the "George E. Brown, Jr. United States Courthouse."

H.R. 5210. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 South George Street in York, Pennsylvania, as the "George Atlee Goodling Post Office Building."

H.R. 5225. An act to revise the boundaries of the Richmond National Battlefield Park

based on the findings of the Civil War Sites Advisory Committee and the National Park Service and to encourage cooperative management, protection, and interpretation of the resources associated with the Civil War and the Civil War battles in and around the city of Richmond, Virginia.

H.R. 5302. An act to designate the United States courthouse located at 1010 Fifth Avenue in Seattle, Washington, as the "William Kenzo Nakamura United States Courthouse."

H.R. 5312. An act to amend the Controlled Substances Act to protect children from drug traffickers.

H.R. 5398. An act to provide that land which is owned by the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana but which is not held in trust by the United States for the Tribe may be leased or transferred by the Tribe without further approval by the United States.

H.R. 5410. An act to establish revolving funding for the operation of certain programs and activities of the Library of Congress, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 406. An act to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to make permanent the demonstration program that allows for direct billing of medicare, medicaid, and other third party payors, and to expand the eligibility under such program to other tribes and tribal organizations.

S. 1296. An act to designate portions of the lower Delaware River and associated tributaries as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

S. 1705. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to enter into land exchanges to acquire from the private owner and to convey to the State of Idaho approximately 1,240 acres of land near the City of Rocks National Reserve, Idaho, and for other purposes.

S. 1707. An act to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) to provide that certain designated Federal entities shall be establishments under such Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2102. An act to provide to the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe a permanent land base within its aboriginal homeland, and for other purposes.

S. 2412. An act to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the National Transportation Safety Board for fiscal years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003, and for other purposes.

S. 2498. An act to authorize the Smithsonian Institution to plan, design, construct, and equip laboratory, administrative, and support space to house base operations for the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory Submillimeter Array located on Mauna Kea at Hilo, Hawaii.

S. 2917. An act to settle the land claims of the Pueblo of Santo Domingo.

S. 3201. An act to rename the National Museum American Art.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 145. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress on the propriety and need for expeditious construction of the National World War II Memorial at the Rainbow Pool on the National Mall in the Nation's Capital.

The message also announced that the House has passed the bill (S. 1936) to