June 20, 2000

Congratulations to the recipients of the 1999 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. This is our Nation’s highest honor for mathematics and science teachers in grades K through 12.

Each year, a national panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians and educators recommends one elementary and one secondary math teacher and one elementary and one secondary science teacher from each state or territory to receive a presidential award. The 1999 recipients were selected from among 650 finalists.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Program is administered by the National Science Foundation (NSF) on behalf of the White House. The program was established in 1983 and is designed to recognize and reward outstanding teachers. In addition to a presidential citation and a trip to Washington, DC, each recipient’s school receives a NSF grant of $7,500 to be used under the direction of the teacher to supplement other resources for improving science or mathematics programs in their school system.

Douglas Heetderks, Lura Hegg and Gretchen Murphy are exceptional and talented teachers like Mr. Heetderks, Ms. Hegg, and Ms. Murphy. I applaud them for their hard work and dedication to our children. They are educating those who will lead this country in creating, developing, and putting to work new ideas and technology.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL RONALD B. BLANCK

Mr. INOUYE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to honor Lieutenant General R. B. Blanck as he retires from the United States Army after more than thirty-two years of active duty service. For the last four years, General Blanck has served as the United States Army Surgeon General and Commander, U.S. Army Medical Command General. During his tenure, he had significant oversight of eight Department of Defense activities as well as the management of the Army’s $6.6 billion, worldwide integrated health system.

Beginning his career as a general medical officer in Vietnam, General Blanck went on to hold a variety of executive positions that include: professor and teaching chief in graduate medical education at the Uniformed Services University; medical consultant to the Army Surgeon General; Commander of Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the North Atlantic Regional Medical Command; and finally as the U.S. Army’s 28th Surgeon General. General Blanck has met every challenge with enthusiasm and zeal. His team-building, compassion, and vision have resulted in greater cooperation among the Federal Health Services and improved delivery of medical care to our nation’s military, past and present.

General Blanck guided the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) through a period of re-engineering and institutional collaborative missions with the Department of State, Department of Treasury, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Agency, National Aeronautic and Space Administration, National Transportation and Safety Board, and the Veterans Administration. These partnerships have fostered cross-disciplinary approaches to ensure the provision of comprehensive, quality healthcare to service members, retired and active, and their family members. Faced with a military medical end-strength reduction of 34%, a reduction in Army medical treatment facilities of 45%, and medical force structure requirements reduction of 77%, General Blanck met the challenge. His brilliant leadership, compassionate vision and unprecedented achievements will guide the Army Medical Department and the entire federal health care system into the new millennium.

General Blanck’s contributions to Persian Gulf Illness and Anthrax programs, his interactions with Congress and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs), and his commitment to the delivery of world-class medical care in support of contingency operations, national emergencies, and potential weapons of mass destruction scenarios are unsurpassed. Mr. President, while General Blanck’s many meritorious awards and decorations demonstrate his contributions in a tangible way, it is the legacy he leaves behind for the Army Medical Corps, the United States Army, and the Department of Defense for which we are most appreciative. It is with pride that I congratulate General Blanck on his outstanding career of exemplary service.

PACENTRO, ITALY, REUNION 2000

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, on July 2, 2000, a very special event will take place in Sterling Heights, Michigan: the first reunion of United States citizens who trace their roots back to the town of Pacentro, Italy. Over 800 people will attend the event, some of them with ancestors who immigrated to the United States over 150 years ago. In addition, the Mayor of Pacentro himself, Mr. Fernando Caparsa, will be attending the event. I rise today to welcome Mr. Caparsa to the State of Michigan.

Pacentro is a small town located east of Rome. It sits in the Abruzzo region in the province of L’Aquila. Born in medieval times, the town is famous for its three castle towers, the oldest of which was built by Count Boarmondo and dates back to the thirteenth century. Another dates from the fifteenth century, and is the home to the loveliest castle in the region. More recently, Pacentro has gained fame as the birthplace of the rock star Madonna’s grandparents.
Mr. Caparso was born there on February 12, 1951, to Antonio and Rosina Fabilli. He is one of five children; three sisters remain in Pacentro and the oldest sister resides in Washington, Michigan.

After completing high school in Pacentro, Mr. Caparso graduated from Liceo Classico Oedio in Sulmona, Italy. He followed his studies there at La Sapienza University in Rome, where he received a doctorate degree. Finally, he attended Gabriele d’Annunzio University in Chieti, where he specialized in sports medicine. Mr. Caparso is presently caring for three towns in the Abruzzo region: Secinario, Gagliano Aterno and Castel Di Ieri.

The sport of soccer has also played a very large role in Mr. Caparso’s life. While completing his studies, he always played soccer as a means of staying fit in the Peligna Valley Region. And, when his playing days were behind him, he became a referee. Mr. Caparso has refereed women’s major league games throughout Italy, and is currently the President of the Sulmona Referee Administration.

Mr. Caparso was elected Mayor of Pacentro in 1999. Having decided that the city needed a better administration, an administration which tended to the needs of all its citizens, he further decided to do something about it. Mr. Caparso was elected Mayor along with a list of conservative councilmen.

Mr. President, I am sure that the President, I am sure that the Pacentro, Italy, Reunion 2000 will be a wonderful success. I know that a great number of individuals have their hearts and souls into this reunion, and I applaud their many efforts. On behalf of the entire United States Senate, I welcome Mr. Fernando Caparso, Mayor of Pacentro, Italy, to the State of Michigan.

CAPTAIN JOSEPH P. AVVEDUTI

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise to honor Captain Joseph P. Avveduti who is retiring from the U.S. Navy in July after thirty years of outstanding service to our nation. From September 1955 to August 1966, Avveduti commanded the U.S.S. Kalamazoo. This ship is named after Kalamazoo, Michigan and the high number of individuals of particular interest to Michigan residents.

Captain Avveduti graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1974. Following his graduation he was designated a Naval Aviator and went on to command several Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadrions. Among his many leadership positions, Captain Avveduti served as the Executive Officer of U.S.S. Independence from January 1993 to June 1995. In 1997, Captain Avveduti graduated from the Command and Staff College in Washington, D.C. He currently holds the Chief of Naval Operations Chair at that institution where he serves as a great role model for the many young men and women in the Navy. During his career, Captain Avveduti received the Legion of Merit, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Meritorious Service Medals, the Air Medal and various campaign and service medals.

Mr. President, Captain Joseph Avveduti’s service to the U.S. Navy, and in particular his command of the U.S.S. Kalamazoo, is to be commended. The United States will lose a respected and well accomplished naval officer upon Captain Avveduti’s retirement. I know my Senate colleagues will join me in congratulating Captain Avveduti on his outstanding service.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL DAVID ARMAND DEKEYSER

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President. It is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to Lieutenant Colonel David A. DeKeyser for his dedicated military service to our country.

LTC DeKeyser retired on June 5, 2000 from the United States Army after serving 28 distinguished years as an officer in the Transportation Corps. I have known him well for many years and since I joined the Senate in 1997, he has served as my Chief of Staff. I came to know LTC DeKeyser personally during the 1970’s and 1980’s when we were both assigned to the 118th Transportation Terminal Unit (TTU) in Mobile, Alabama. For 8 years we trained at monthly drills and annual training. We have worked with one another since that time in a series of increasingly important and difficult assignments.

LTC DeKeyser was born March 21, 1950 in Mobile, Alabama. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1972 from Auburn University. Throughout his career— with duty assignments in Europe, the United States, the Middle East during Operation Desert Storm, and most recently with duty at the United States Transportation Command— he consistently distinguished himself. During times of peace and war, in both command and staff positions, he has achieved excellence. He was activated with the 118th TTU for duty during the Gulf War and spent 6 months away from his family in Kuwait. LTC DeKeyser was decorated with the Joint Service Commendation Medal, and the Southwest Asia Service Medal. His other notable military awards include the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Medal, and two awards of the Meritorious Service Medal.

LTC DeKeyser’s professionalism and leadership as a military officer earned him the respect and admiration of his soldiers, fellow officers, and members of the U.S. Congress. No officer was better respected—from the newest private to the commanding officer— than LTC DeKeyser. He is known for his integrity, compassion, humor, and ability to inspire men and women from all walks of life. These are the qualities of a soldier who deserves the thanks of a grateful nation for a job well done. In addition, he made notable contributions in his community as a member of various civic organizations to include the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, the Alabama Coastal Resources Advisory Council, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, the Alabama-Mississippi Sea Grant Consortium Advisory Committee, Goodwill Industries Board of Directors, the American Heart Association Board of Directors, the Mobile Jaycees, and the Reserve Officers Association.

Armand has served his country for 28 years in the Army but he has also provided magnificent services to the Nation in a number of other crucial government assignments.

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