

African Americans as military pilots. The training for this program took place at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, AL, the famous school founded by Booker T. Washington on July 4, 1881.

There was doubt among many in the military that African Americans were up to the task, but the Tuskegee Airmen proved them all wrong. Fighter pilots, navigators, bombardiers, and maintenance staffs were successfully trained to be members of the 332nd Fighter Group. The airmen were under the able command of COL Benjamin Davis, Jr., and the highly motivated group flew successful missions over Sicily, the Mediterranean, and North Africa.

By the end of the war, 992 men had graduated from the pilot training programs at Tuskegee, and 450 had seen combat overseas. The Tuskegee Airmen were awarded numerous high honors, including Distinguished Flying Crosses, Legions of Merit, Silver Stars, Purple Hearts, the Croix de Guerre, and the Red Star of Yugoslavia. In all their combat, they never lost a bomber to enemy fighters. A Distinguished Unit Citation was awarded to the 332nd Fighter Group for "outstanding performance and extraordinary heroism" in 1945. By the end of the war, the Airmen had overcome segregation and racial prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II.

We must never forget the spirit and dedication of these great patriots. Today, as our Air Force is playing such an important role in the global war on terrorism, the ideas and principles that the Tuskegee Airmen represent remain of the utmost importance. With this in mind, I stand today in support of S. Con. Res. 11, a resolution that Mr. SHELBY and I have submitted to express the sense of Congress that the U.S. Air Force should continue to honor and learn from the great example set by the Tuskegee Airmen. I ask my fellow Senators to support this resolution, and I urge the U.S. Air Force to continue to take note of this important part of its storied history.

CENTRAL INTERCOLLEGIATE
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to recognize the success of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association as they tip off their 60th Men's Basketball Tournament this week.

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, CIAA, is an athletic conference consisting of 12 historically African-American institutions of higher education, including: Bowie State University, Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, Johnson C. Smith University, Livingstone College, North Carolina Central

University, St. Augustine's College, St. Paul's College, Shaw University, Virginia State University, Virginia Union University and Winston-Salem State University.

Established in 1912, the CIAA is the Nation's oldest black athletic conference, rich in history and heritage. The conference is entering its 85th year of athletic competition in which they have reaped continued success and recognition on the field and the court. The CIAA is a premiere member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, NCAA, Division II and the reputation of their athletic programs, in conjunction with the academic success of their athletes, is a proud legacy for the conference.

The CIAA basketball tournament began humbly in Washington, DC in 1946 and has grown into one of the largest, most prestigious and long-tenured sporting traditions in America, particularly in the South. Started by a group of visionaries led by legendary coach John McClendon, the tournament has come to showcase dynamic basketball that has produced the likes of past NBA stars Earl Monroe, Bobby Dandridge, Charles Oakley, Rick Mahorn and current NBA star Ronald Murray of the Seattle SuperSonics. The weeklong affair draws a host of national celebrities and dignitaries for a variety of activities and events. The tournament festivities serve as a sort of homecoming for students, fans and alumni of the conference. In 2004, the tournament drew over 100,000 fans to Raleigh, NC, making it the third largest basketball tournament in the nation, regardless of division.

As a former collegiate athlete, I understand the difficulties faced by institutions of higher education in planning and supporting athletic tournaments. I congratulate the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association on its rich and sustained history of superb college athletics. The celebration of this 60th Anniversary Basketball Tournament represents a remarkable achievement for those who have worked tirelessly over the past decades to ensure its longevity. I wish the conference and its annual tournament continued success.

WILLIE McCARTER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments today to acknowledge the work and leadership of Willie McCarter who has served for the past 15 years as chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, IFI.

The IFI was conceived by my old friend Tip O'Neill who secured the original funding in 1986. Willie McCarter became involved with the fund in 1989 and became chairman in 1992. Under his tenure, the fund flourished and became an integral economic tool that helped bring peace and understanding in Northern Ireland.

The investments that the IFI made in border counties provided an economic boost to communities that had no hope. In tumultuous times where communities were divided by religion, the IFI sponsored projects that not only created desperately needed jobs but employment where Catholics and Protestants worked side by side.

Marcelle and I have become close friends with Willie and his wife Mary. I know that our friendship will transcend his departure as chairman from the IFI. We look forward to visits with both of them here and in Ireland for many years to come.

The Irish Times interviewed Willie McCarter prior to his stepping down as chairman of the IFI at the end of February. I ask unanimous consent that the entire article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Irish Times, Feb. 4, 2005]

FUND CHAIRMAN PREPARES TO BID A FOND
FAREWELL

Willie McCarter, who is stepping down as chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, tells Siobhan Creaton, Finance Correspondent, of its many achievements.

After 15 years as a key figure at the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), Derry-born businessman Willie McCarter is preparing for departure.

At the end of February he will relinquish the chairman's role to Denis Rooney. Mr. Rooney is a chartered quantity surveyor and businessman from Northern Ireland whom the British and Irish governments have hailed as a skilled and able leader for the fund.

Mr. McCarter will be sad to say goodbye but says he is proud of the IFI's contribution towards creating a more stable community in Northern Ireland.

The fund, which has committed 768 million to 5,500 projects in the North and border counties, was set up by the Irish and British governments in 1986 as a vehicle to promote economic regeneration and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the six border counties.

The late U.S. politician T.P. 'Tipp' O'Neill championed the idea after a visit to Donegal and Derry.

"John Hume brought him to see his grandmother's home outside Buncrana in 1985 and later they went to Derry. That was during the dark days of unemployment and Tipp said he would try to do something to create jobs," Mr. McCarter says.

In Washington, O'Neill's quest to raise financial aid for the region was supported by President Reagan and resulted in the U.S. Government pledging \$50 million (EUR 38.4 million) for this purpose.

The British and Irish governments, which had concluded the Anglo-Irish Agreement, used the money to start the IFI in 1986.

It was a controversial vehicle and, having grown out of this agreement, was viewed with deep suspicion by Northern Ireland's Protestant community.

Mr. McCarter, a Protestant, recalls the fund's initial difficulties.

"It had very few friends. It got bound up in the political to-ing and fro-ing around the Anglo Irish Agreement."

In 1989, Mr. McCarter, who was chief executive of Fruit of the Loom, the clothing manufacturer that was rapidly expanding in Donegal and Derry, was asked to get involved.