

trying to help, but am widowed and on a limited income. My husband was a World War II hero, whose honors included, among over 50 medals, two Purple Hearts and the Legion of Merit. We are trying to do our best to hang on but it gets harder every day. I paid \$50 to fill my gas tank yesterday at a discount station. If the situation continues to decline, I do not know how we will continue to be able to drive to work or the grocery store. As of now, I am only driving when necessary, and am limiting my spending in every way. Thank you for your concern.

SHARON.

TRIBUTE TO LAPRELE AND JUDGE LLOYD GEORGE

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a Nevada couple who have spent their lives contributing to the community, committing to their family, and serving as an example to us all.

Lloyd and LaPrele George have shared more than 50 years together. During that half century, Lloyd served as a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force, graduated from Brigham Young University, and earned his juris doctorate from the University of California at Berkley. Since 1974 and an appointment to the Federal Bankruptcy Court, he has been known fondly in Nevada as Judge George. He was appointed as a U.S. district court judge in 1984, served 5 years as the chief U.S. district judge, and assumed senior judge status in 1997.

I am reminded of Judge George every time I go to my southern Nevada office, as the newest Federal building in Las Vegas proudly bears his name. Judge George is a fixture in the Nevada legal community, but his reputation extends beyond the walls of his courthouse and beyond the borders of the United States. He has lectured on legal topics nationally and internationally and often serves as an ambassador, showing foreign dignitaries around the courthouse and introducing them to southern Nevada.

While his name may be known by jurists around the world, his own world has always revolved around his wife LaPrele, their 4 children, and 13 grandchildren. In November, Opportunity Village, one of the most respected local organizations in Las Vegas, will honor the George Family with the "Order of the Village." The Georges will be recognized for their tireless advocacy on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities.

Lloyd and LaPrele's oldest son Doug sparked their involvement in the special needs community. At a time when it was expected that children with intellectual disabilities would be sent to institutions, the Georges instead embraced their son and became champions for those with intellectual disabilities and an inspiration for their families. They were involved in the early days of the Clark County Association of Re-

tarded Children, even cosigning the mortgage on the group's first building. Over time, it evolved into Opportunity Village, Nevada's largest private, not-for-profit community rehabilitation program. Serving more than 3,000 people a year, Opportunity Village offers Nevadans, like Doug George, a chance to earn a paycheck and feel a sense of independence.

The Georges have shined the light of their service on southern Nevada for many years. We have been blessed by their heartfelt involvement and loving leadership. Judge George and LaPrele, thank you for your commitment to your family and to our community. There is hope and opportunity for many Nevadans because of you. May God continue to bless you and your family.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO FALLEN WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS

• Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I have a favorite quote about firefighters: "All men are created equal, then a few become firemen."

Firefighters are indeed a rare breed—selfless and brave. It is a tragedy when even one is lost. On September 1, Montana and America lost not one but three firefighters in an airplane crash as they rushed to quell the flames of a fire in California. Gene Wahlstrom, Greg Gonsioroski, and Zachary VanderGriend may be gone from this Earth, but they will never be forgotten. Their sacrifice and unwavering dedication to the lives of others stand as an example for all Americans. These brave men were based in Missoula, MT, and though they hailed from Washington and Utah in addition to the Big Sky State, I am proud to call them all Montanans.

Gene Wahlstrom began his 35-year flying career as a crop duster and rose to the position of chief pilot for Neptune Aviation. Gene was a Vietnam veteran and a natural leader and mentor. Folks who knew Gene say he was a kind, genuine, accomplished, and loyal friend.

Most folks who knew Greg Gonsioroski just called him "Gonzo." He began his career as an airplane mechanic but decided to take to the skies himself. Greg was a native of Baker, MT. A family man first, father to Gabriel, Grady, and Gracelyn, and doting husband to Kim, he will be remembered as a gentle giant and a loving and patient father, husband, and friend.

Zachary VanderGriend was a new employee with Neptune Aviation but not new to flying—he had dreamed of being a pilot since he was 2 years old. Zachary got his pilot's license when he was 17 and spent much of his time in volunteer programs such as the Young

Eagles. As noted in his eulogy, Zachary was a devoted Christian who loved to fly "because it was there he felt closest to God."

I believe service is one of the most honorable things a person can do. Whether it is service to ones community, State, or country, service is the most noble of all human endeavors.

In Montana and indeed across much of the West, fires are an almost constant threat. It is the price we pay for living in one of the most beautiful places on earth. So every year we place our belongings, our homes and our lives in the hands of firefighters—too often without a second thought.

The loss of Gene, Greg, and Zachary gives us pause. As a Montanan and an American, I feel tremendous sadness in their passing but also tremendous gratitude for the time we were graced with their presence. ●

REMEMBERING NATHAN WEXLER

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, the State of Delaware lost one of its most remarkable citizens on September 10, with the passing of Nathan Wexler at the age of 97.

I first met Nate many years ago during one of my early campaigns, when he showed up in my campaign headquarters offering to volunteer. From that day forward, though he had retired from his dry cleaning business and was at an age when most folks are ready to slow down, Nate was one of our most active volunteers.

A talented artist, Nate began a second career as a professional sign painter. Indeed, one of the staples of our campaign's offices was a large sign that he painted many years ago. I have had several campaigns, and several campaign headquarters, but Nate's sign remains, a reminder of his commitment as well as his friendship.

But for all of Nate's artistic talent, his most enduring characteristic was his love of people, and his ability to inspire loyalty and affection from everyone he came in contact with.

Many of the volunteers on my campaigns have been young people, full of idealism and eager to learn. They have often been young enough to be Nate's grandchildren or even great-grandchildren. But Nate always relished their idealism. He tried to see people and events through their eyes and learn from that point of view, and he gently shared his experience and wisdom. It was remarkable to see the affection and respect he engendered in those idealistic kids.

My family and I were privileged to spend time with Nate in settings away from the political arena, and those occasions were simply a delight. They were times rich with humor and wit, as well as wisdom. Our conversations were filled with insight, not just into the past and present, but looking far into