

protect the environment. I applaud their accomplishments.

TRIBUTE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
CONNECTICUT WOMEN HUSKIES—
2000 NCAA WOMEN'S BASKET-
BALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 13, 2000

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to the 2000 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Women's Basketball National Champions, the University of Connecticut Huskies. On Sunday, April 2, the Husky Women put on what can only be described as a 40-minute basketball clinic for their opponents, the Tennessee Lady Vols.

Earlier this year, I had the great privilege to meet with Geno Auriemma and the team when they were in town to play Big East Conference rival Georgetown. Their individual accomplishments this year, like those of the women playing before them, continue to raise the standard for excellence and achievement in women's athletics. I would like to congratulate each member of the team, Coaches Geno Auriemma and Chris Dailey, Lew Perkins and the UConn Athletic Department, and all the fans and supporters of UConn Women's Basketball who made this great victory possible.

I can no more eloquently describe these achievements than Randy Smith did in his article published in the April 3, 2000, edition of the *Journal Inquirer* titled "Return of the Native is Masterpiece." I submit the text of that article for the RECORD at this time:

[From the *Journal Inquirer*, Apr. 3, 2000]

RETURN OF THE NATIVE IS MASTERPIECE
(By Randy Smith)

PHILADELPHIA.—A couple of minutes after his Connecticut women's basketball team won the national championship, coach Geno Auriemma embrace his own triple crown. He hugged his children, his wife, and his mother. There were tears in everybody's eyes.

The native had returned to Philadelphia to play for college basketball's biggest prize. He not only won it, but claimed Tennessee coach Pat Summitt's scalp in the process.

UConn's 71-52 decision over the Lady Vols was more coronation than competition.

"A lot of guys who were coaching when I was playing used to tell me I'll never be any good as a player and they were right," Auriemma said. "So I turned out to be the coach of a championship team. It's kind of funny to come back and they're all in the stands. They're happy for me because they finally saw me win something."

There was never a doubt.

Basketball is nowhere near as complicated as paid analysts try to make it. Do you know what it takes to win games? Good players. The rest is rhetoric.

It has taken Auriemma the better part of a decade to assemble more good players at UConn than Summitt has at Tennessee and those good players strutted their stuff Monday night. Shea Ralph, Asjha Jones, and Kelly Schumacher were standouts, but Svetlana Abrosimova, Swin Cash, Tamika Williams, Sue Bird, and Kennitra Johnson all played pivotal roles. Under the glare of the big spotlight, UConn got something from everybody.

"I've told these kids all year long that every pass we make in practice, every cut,

every rebound, pretend like it's the one that's going to win the national championship," Auriemma said. "The kids have practiced that way all year. And the night they had to do it, they did it better than at any other time of the season."

Associate head coach Chris Dailey agreed. "This was the A game we've been waiting for," she said. "All anybody talks about is how talented we are. But if you take a closer look, our players are unselfish, they've got heart and character, they'll make sacrifices, and they're willing to put away individual things to be part of a team. There's not one pain in the neck in the bunch. That's the story."

Here's another: Summit was hoisted by her own self-confidence. Had she admitted to herself that Tennessee would be the second-best team on the floor, she could have put in some wrinkles to give UConn problems. She could have played Semeka Randall on Bird to disrupt UConn's offense. She could have played a lot of zone to slow the pace of the game. She could have thrown in a couple of gimmicky defenses. Instead she opted to play UConn straight-up, even down a starter in Kristen Clement.

It was a very, very bad decision.

"It was an extremely disappointing performance by our basketball team and a very painful loss," Summit said. "I don't think any of us expected this. Nothing we tried worked. At times, I felt helpless. We played on our heels from the beginning. I hate that we got ourselves in this position and couldn't have been more competitive. We'll look at the film later. No time soon, though."

Auriemma spoke of Tennessee's "aura" leading up to the game, knowing full well that Connecticut carries one of its own.

"Do you know how many real adjustments we made?" None. They had to adjust to us."

That's not altogether true. Kyra Elzy's presence in Tennessee's starting lineup because of Clement's injury freed up one UConn player on defense, in this case, Abrosimova, who doubled down on Michelle Snow in the game's opening minutes. Snow was forced to make reaction passes and they're not that easy, especially if you're not accustomed to making them.

Tennessee's offense looked to be in a constant state of panic, while its defense was dissected time and time again by UConn's back door cuts and passes, a la the Princeton men's team.

"They ran back door cuts off the strong side and cuts across the middle," Summit said. "They ran the same two offenses over and over again. It's not anything new. We'd seen it. Everybody got beat. Semeka Randall got lost on defense, probably more than anyone, and she's one of our best defenders. I wanted to play man to try and get something going, but I'd have to go back to zone because how many layups do you want to give them?"

If Summit had a white towel, she probably would have tossed it on the floor midway through the second half.

UConn employed pressure defense in spots to help cause 26 Tennessee turnovers.

"You don't use pressure just to steal the ball," Auriemma said. "You use it to see how they handle it and they didn't handle it all that great. Had they gone boom, boom, layup, we would have gotten out of it. But they were struggling."

Auriemma's use of pressure was borderline masterful during UConn's run through the NCAA Tournament. He said it was part of the plan from the beginning.

"For five months, we made teams prepare for our halfcourt offense and our halfcourt defense," he said. "But we worked on the press every day in practice. We wanted to

make teams prepare for more than one thing. We wanted a lot of things in our arsenal. The press was in our pocket all along. Come NCAA tournament time, we went to it because we wanted to be super aggressive. At the risk of sounding smart, that was the plan."

"You don't use your closer until you need him."

UConn ran the table, all right, but who knew the last ball, the orange one, would be a hanger?

The first national championship of the millennium may very well be remembered as the passing of the guard. UConn brought more fans to Philadelphia than Tennessee and those fans made more noise. UConn sent out more good players than Tennessee and those players scored way more points. The better team won without breaking stride and may be the first hard evidence that UConn indeed has a better program than Tennessee.

"You saw tonight what good teams are made of," Auriemma said. "This team has a chemistry both on and off the court. This team is closer than any I've had."

Auriemma proved Thomas Wolfe wrong. You can go home again.

A DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
NUCLEAR WEAPONS FACILITY

HON. JOEL HEFLEY

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 13, 2000

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I share with you an update on the first-ever scheduled closure of a Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons facility. In less than seven years, residents along the Front Range of Colorado will no longer live in the shadow of Rocky Flats, a 6,500 acre former weapons component manufacturing facility. What once was home to more than 100 tons of plutonium and plutonium byproducts will become history. More than 700 structures representing 3.5 million square feet will be demolished. The two on-site landfills that contributed to soil and groundwater contamination will no longer exist.

Since the early years of the Nuclear Age to the end of the Cold War, Rocky Flats, a mere 16 miles northwest of Denver, was a manufacturing site for plutonium triggers and other nuclear weapons parts. In 1989, the FBI and the EPA closed the site due to alleged violations of environmental law.

A joint company headquartered in my district has developed a fast-track closure plan, which DOE fully supports, that shaves decades off the original clean-up schedule. Originally expected to take 65 years and cost more than \$35 billion, the accelerated closure plan will be completed by 2007 for under \$8 billion.

To date great progress has been made at Rocky Flats such as cleaning up the majority of the top 10 environmental risk areas, including the removal of 30 tons of depleted uranium. Thousands of liters of plutonium and uranium solutions have been drained from dozens of tanks and stabilized. Most recently, the weapons research and development facility was decontaminated and demolished—six months ahead of schedule.

Within this decade, all nuclear materials and radioactive waste will be shipped to off-site storage facilities. Environmental remediation will be completed so that land is available for