

Day. One young woman who attended said that young people loved the Pope because the Pope loved them: "People think that teenagers and young people are just out there and reckless, but he didn't see it that way. He said, 'You are the future and I love you for that.'"

The world is now mourning the death of Pope John Paul II. In parishes from the Americas to Europe to Africa to Asia, millions are paying tribute to a leader whose central message was love, respect, faith and responsibility to our fellow man. That example is his legacy, and regardless of our individual faiths, it is an example for all of us of how to live and relate to our neighbors. May God grant Pope John Paul II eternal rest and peace, and we thank him for a life lived in the service of people everywhere.

IN HONOR OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUCCESSFUL SALK POLIO VACCINE TRIALS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to commemorate an historic event that changed the world. Fifty years ago today, Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr., director of the Poliomyelitis Vaccine Evaluation Center and founding chair of the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, announced that the Salk polio vaccine was "safe, effective, and potent."

That announcement marked the culmination of the most comprehensive field trials ever conducted, unprecedented in scope and magnitude. In the early 1950s, Dr. Jonas Salk, a postdoctoral student of Dr. Francis at the University of Michigan, developed a promising vaccine against poliomyelitis in his laboratory at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Salk returned to the University of Michigan to work with his longtime mentor, Dr. Francis, who led the year-long field trials demonstrating that "the vaccine works." More than 300,000 individuals participated in the work of the trials, including 20,000 physicians and public health officers, 40,000 registered nurses, 14,000 school principals, and 200,000 volunteers. More than 100 statisticians and epidemiologists tabulated data from the approximately 1.8 million children across the United States, Canada, and Finland who were involved in the trial. These brave children, who stepped forward to receive a shot not knowing if it would be the real vaccine or a placebo or whether it would be safe or harmful, are now affectionately known as polio pioneers.

While we rarely consider the possibility of contracting polio today, let me remind you that for generations polio was one of the most feared childhood diseases. Poliomyelitis, a neuromuscular disease also known as infantile paralysis, is caused by the polio virus. The virus invades nerve cells in the spinal cord, resulting in weakness or paralysis of the limbs and muscles.

Prior to the successful work of Drs. Salk and Thomas, no one knew how to prevent polio, and there was no cure for the disease. Hot weather in late summer was "polio season," bringing on a rash of new cases of paralytic polio each year. In 1916, a devastating epidemic struck New York, killing 9,000 people and leaving 27,000 disabled. For the next 40 years, not a summer passed without an epidemic occurring somewhere in the U.S. In the 1940s and 1950s, the number of cases reported in the U.S. ranged from 40,000 to 60,000 each year. The warmer months of the year were termed "nightmare summers of quarantine and contagion." President Roosevelt, who suffered personally from the effects of polio, founded the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, now called the March of Dimes, and called upon millions of private citizens to donate dimes to fund the foundation's work to fight polio. Today, polio has been nearly eradicated.

Fifty years ago this morning, before more than 500 scientists, physicians, and reporters at Rackham Auditorium in Ann Arbor, Dr. Francis told an anxious world of parents that the Salk vaccine had been proven to be effective in preventing polio. Please join me in honoring the success of Drs. Francis and Salk in combating this devastating disease.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COMMENDING THE EFFORTS OF BASKETBALL WITHOUT BORDERS

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I commend the efforts of Basketball without Borders, an initiative that promotes friendship, understanding, and healthy living for young people around the world.

Today, the National Basketball Association, NBA, and the International Basketball Federation, FIBA, announced that Basketball without Borders will hold four instructional camps in the coming year. For the first time, Basketball without Borders will be staged on four continents: North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. It will feature professional basketball players from diverse backgrounds, including China's Yao Ming, Argentina's Manu Ginobili, Germany's Dirk Nowitzki, and Congo's Dikembe Mutombo.

The Basketball without Borders initiative is more than an opportunity for children to meet their favorite players and learn basketball skills. It is also a chance for them to learn important lessons about the world in which they live.

In addition to basketball instruction, the children who participate in Basketball without Borders will learn about HIV/AIDS prevention, the importance of education, and ways to lead a healthier life. They will also have the opportunity to meet children whose ethnicities, backgrounds, and cultures are different from their own.

I also applaud the NBA and FIBA for the charitable efforts that are part of the Basketball without Borders initiative. As part of this year's program, the NBA will be conducting several auctions on its website, with the proceeds funding community improvement efforts worldwide, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

As public figures, professional athletes can send a strong message by serving as role models both on and off the playing field. It is my hope that the players who are taking part in Basketball without Borders will inspire basketball fans around the world to take a closer look at ways they can extend a hand of friendship to diverse communities around the globe. I salute the athletes who are participating in this worthy venture, as well as all those whose hard work has made this initiative possible.●

TRIBUTE TO RALPH STURGES, CHIEF OF THE MOHEGAN TRIBE

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I honor Ralph Sturges, Chief of the Mohegan Tribe. On April 13, Chief Sturges will receive the Citizen of the Year award from the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut.

Chief Sturges is known throughout southeastern Connecticut for his leadership, his community involvement, and his humility. Even as he has risen in the ranks of the Mohegan Tribe, from serving as a member of the Tribal Council in the 1980s to becoming lifetime chief in 1991, he has never lost a sense of who he is or what he stands for.

Born in 1918, Ralph Sturges served in our armed forces during the World War II as a security and intelligence officer. He went on to work for the Philadelphia Legal Aid Society and the Salvation Army, as well as the Legnos Boat Company.

Chief Sturges was renowned for his skills as a craftsman, particularly as a sculptor of traditional Mohegan cultural symbols. Among his many works were a whale sculpture donated to Governor Ella Grasso and the carving of a base for the headstone of the Mohegan chief Samuel Uncas.

When Ralph Sturges was elected lifetime chief of the Mohegan Tribe, as he puts it, he "didn't have a telephone and didn't have an office." He devoted a great deal of time and energy over the coming decade to the cause of securing federal recognition for the Mohegans—a goal that was realized on March 7, 1994.

Today, the Mohegan Tribe stands as a remarkable success story. So much of this success is due to the efforts and dedication of Ralph Sturges, as well as countless others who worked with him over the years.

Chief Sturges is an outstanding citizen, a respected leader, and a devoted member of the Mohegan tribe. He has forged strong bonds between his tribe and the State of Connecticut, as well