

Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and the 1600th Anniversary of the creation of the Armenian alphabet.

I am honored to recognize this milestone visit to California by a distinguished Armenian and world leader. I wish both the Catholicos and the Armenian community in California a renewed sense of purpose and inspiration from this visit.

**ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY,  
INC.**

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I am proud to pay tribute to Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, America's first Greek-letter organization established by black college women.

On Thursday, September 22, 2005, I had the pleasure of spending time with nearly one hundred members of this remarkable organization, including Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and AKA's International President, Linda White. I have long been aware of the rich history and tremendous contributions made to our Nation by Alpha Kappa Alpha and the other eight Black Greek Letter Organizations and I was particularly delighted to participate in AKA's event entitled "The Spirit, Let's Share it and Connect," which focused on the many ways in which AKA contributes to our communities.

In 1908, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority was founded at Howard University in Washington, DC, by Ethel Hedgeman Lyle, who envisioned AKA as a source of social and intellectual enrichment for its members. Over the past century, AKA has evolved into a nationwide organization of college-trained women working to improve the socioeconomic conditions in their cities, States and countries throughout the world.

Alpha Kappa Alpha's achievements are the result of volunteer service that captures the organization's core values. Each year, a National Program theme is constructed around one of AKA's five "targets": Education, the Black Family, Health, Economics and the Arts. This year's target is Education, with the Signature Program of the administration being "The Ivy Reading AKAdemy," a reading initiative focused on early learning and mastery of basic reading skills by the end of third grade. All AKA chapters are required to implement an after school reading initiative for students in kindergarten through third grade. Across the United States there are nine such federally funded demonstration sites in low-performing, economically deprived, innercity schools.

AKA has made several significant contributions to the black community and to American society over all over the past century. These efforts have included a wide range of issues, including among them election reform and health care and education initiatives. For example, in 1983 AKA launched a

massive registration drive designed to increase black voter registration by 25 percent by the November 1984 elections. In 1999, AKA was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the United States Department of Transportation to promote increased seatbelt use and vehicle passenger safety in the minority community. That same year, AKA established a funded partnership with the United States Department of Health and Human Services to promote women's health. Just 4 years ago, AKA raised over \$25,000 for sickle cell anemia. In 2002, AKA built and dedicated nine AKAdemies in South Africa and contributed \$25,000 to the National Council of Negro Women's Mortgage Liquidation Fund.

In addition to advancing these services, AKA maintains a focus on improving the quality of life for its members. AKA cultivates and encourages high scholastic and ethical standards; promotes unity and friendship among college women; alleviates problems facing girls and women; maintains a progressive interest in college life and serves over 170,000 women in the United States, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa. Its distinguished alumni include national civic leaders such as astronaut Mae Jamison, author Toni Morrison, poet Maya Angelou, Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, and the late Judge Constance Baker Motley. I was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Judge Constance Baker Motley earlier this week. A champion of civil rights and a giant of the legal profession, she will be remembered for her lasting contributions to American jurisprudence and to our larger society. I am certain that the women of AKA join me in mourning her passing, grateful and heartened by the fact that the civil rights movement existed in large part because of the efforts of their friend in sisterhood.

I am privileged and proud to have a special bond with the remarkable women of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Incorporated and am honored to share with my colleagues the many reasons we should all admire and thank the members of this organization for their long-lasting and unwavering commitment to improving the lives of so many.

**40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES**

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, 40 years ago today, President Lyndon Johnson signed landmark legislation into law creating the Foundation on the Arts and Humanities. I was privileged to be one of the cosponsors of this measure, which created the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities and bring a new nationwide focus to the creative community across America in the fields of literature and history, the visual arts, and the performing arts.

Throughout these four decades, the Endowments have provided impressive

leadership in enhancing the cultural life of the Nation. The budget for the two agencies is relatively small, but they have distributed Federal grants to a wide range of deserving educational and cultural organizations in communities in all parts of the country.

The best of our cultural heritage has broad appeal to peoples everywhere. The scholarship, the history, and the arts of America are admired around the world. Each generation of scholars and artists has much to share with the rest of the world, and with the generations to come as well. The important role of the Endowments is to support the museums, the galleries, and the theaters in our communities, and assist them in presenting these artistic achievements so that audiences, students and scholars can study them, and learn from them.

Down through the ages, the arts have inspired generations after generations with their beauty, tolerance and understanding. They enable individuals to reach beyond their own experience and know something of other peoples and other cultures. In this shrinking world, it is even more important to respect our neighbors, and build cultural bridges to reach out to one another in our shared world. The arts and humanities offer indispensable opportunities to achieve this important goal.

The Endowments help disseminate the creative work being done at the local level. In Massachusetts, we are privileged to have an extraordinary range of cultural institutions that document the story of our Commonwealth from its earliest days to the present. We are very proud of the cultural landmarks that tell of our history, so that future generations too will understand the challenges that faced the Pilgrim settlers in Plymouth, the struggle for independence that began in Boston Harbor and at Concord Bridge, the harrowing era of one stop on the Underground Railroad, the rugged life in the fishing community of New Bedford, and the early years of the China trade.

So, too, in every other State in our Nation, the story is told of discovery, development and achievement, the continuing story of the American journey.

The important task of the Endowments is to honor and preserve this legacy. Over the past four decades, they have compiled an impressive record of vital support for both the arts and humanities. The Arts Endowment has funded major arts exhibitions, dance tours by large national companies, and performances by smaller regional companies. The Humanities Endowment has provided vital research and educational support in colleges and universities across the country. It has supported a national effort to preserve important documents, brittle books and important artifacts. Its public programs have underwritten brilliant documentaries on topics ranging from the story of the Civil War to the story of baseball.

These two great Endowments have amply fulfilled the early hope that