

roles as the founding executive director of the Institute for Fisheries Resources, a member of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, and a member of the Marine Fish Conservation Network.

A resolute and determined defender of the sea and those whose livelihoods depend on it, Zeke Grader is truly a force of nature. His work will continue to make a difference for years to come, and I send my deepest gratitude to Zeke for his outstanding service to California and the Nation.●

TRIBUTE TO REBECCA ALEXANDER

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Rebecca Alexander, a native Californian who has overcome tremendous obstacles and inspired countless others to face their own challenges with courage and strength.

On April 14th, the Foundation Fighting Blindness will honor Rebecca Alexander with its Hope and Spirit Award at the Thirteenth Annual For the Love of Sight Visionary Awards Dinner here in Washington.

Rebecca was born in Oakland with Usher syndrome type III, a rare genetic disorder that causes progressive blindness and deafness. She began losing her sight as a teenager, and suffered a fall at age 18 that broke nearly every bone in her body. Today, Rebecca is almost completely blind and deaf.

Despite these daunting setbacks, Rebecca has persevered. Now 36 years old, Rebecca is a psychotherapist with two master's degrees from Columbia University and a successful private practice in New York City. She is also the author of a moving memoir, "Not Fade Away."

In addition to her professional achievements, Rebecca regularly teaches spin classes and competes in the Civilian Military Combine, CMC, for extreme athletes. Some of her extraordinary athletic feats include helping run the Olympic torch across America, participating in a 600-mile bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles, skydiving, and bungee jumping.

As the Foundation Fighting Blindness prepares to honor Rebecca, I want to join them in expressing my congratulations, appreciation, and profound admiration for this remarkable young woman.●

TRIBUTE TO DAVID MITZNER

● Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, our Nation was founded on an idea—an idea that every person has the right to freely speak, live, worship, work, and build flourishing lives for themselves and their families. And today I want to recognize a man who embraces those liberties and whose witness is exceptional. For a century, Mr. Mitzner has been a warrior for freedom.

David Mitzner was born to Jewish parents in Poland, and during World War II he lost his family to the Holocaust. He survived 8 long years in a Soviet gulag. A Russian officer told the men at the labor camp, "Here you're going to live, here you're going to die." David refused to accept that as his fate and fought to live. In 1949 he defied his captors and escaped the iron grip of communism to come to the United States.

He arrived in New York with just \$17 in his pocket. He didn't know English and didn't have any relatives to rely upon. He got his first job working for a hosiery manufacturer and today he is one of world's most successful private real estate investors whose projects span from Texas to Poland.

He works with the same vigor, energy, and gratitude as he did when he stepped onto American soil 66 years ago. And at 100 years old, Mr. Mitzner still goes into the office to make sure his company continues to operate with uncompromising integrity and excellence. He has pioneered development in cities across the world, and particularly in Warsaw, his childhood home, which was nearly destroyed by communism. His fellow investors said it couldn't be done but he proved them wrong.

As he often says, there are miracles all around us. David's life is a miracle and it is one that continues to overflow into all those who are blessed to know him.

In closing, I want to recount a brief anecdote from the Passover Seder, which I had the privilege of celebration with David and the extended Mitzner family last year. It was very close to his 99th birthday, and I remember him saying, "99 is nothing. When I turn 100, that will be something." David, you are now 100, and it is indeed something. Happy birthday, friend, and thank you for the legacy you have built, not merely on bricks and mortar, but on upon your fortitude and your faith.●

CONGRATULATING JUSTICE BEST

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate Justice Best on being chosen as a second prize winner in C-SPAN's national 2015 StudentCam competition. Ms. Best is a junior at Spanish Springs High School in Sparks, NV, and was one of 5,000 students in 45 States to compete. This was the largest amount of participants to ever enter the contest since it began 11 years ago. The competition allowed for middle school and high school participants and required the students to make a 5- to 7-minute documentary responding to this statement: "The Three Branches and You: tell a story that demonstrates how a policy, law, or action by either the executive, legislative, or judicial branch has affected you or your community." Students were chosen based upon how well their videos demonstrated research and planning and upon their ability to include a

diverse range of expert interviews on the topic. Last, judges paid close attention to the students' ability to demonstrate critical thought on their topics.

Ms. Best chose an important topic pertinent to Nevada on both a State and Federal level: the greater sage grouse endangered species listing. Throughout the documentary, she presented the two sides of the issue by interviewing professionals and locals with knowledge on the topic and concluded that listing the greater sage grouse as an endangered species would be detrimental to the Nevada economy. Ms. Best was one of 16 second prize winners, earning a total of \$1,000. She is a shining example of how hard work and dedication result in success and stands as a role model for future Spanish Springs Cougars.

I am excited to see a local student bringing recognition to both Nevada and to Spanish Springs High School for her advancement in a national competition. She should be proud to call herself a top contender in a competitive environment. I ask my colleagues to join me and all Nevadans in congratulating Ms. Best for her efforts and honorable representation of Nevada.●

CONGRATULATING SHIRLEY MCLEE

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate Shirley McLee on being named Regional Magnet Teacher of the Year by the Magnet Schools of America. Ms. McLee was one of eight selected to receive the national award, recognizing her dedication to Ed W. Clark High School's magnet program. Her unwavering commitment to the program has grown it to be the success it is now, providing some of the best magnet courses in the Nation.

Ms. McLee was chosen as the western region winner out of teachers from Nevada, California, Oregon, and Arizona. The award recognizes full-time teachers who are dedicated to providing innovative programs to students, as well as promoting equity and diversity among those involved in the program. Ms. McLee's hard work has had great influence at Ed W. Clark High School and has positively contributed to the three different magnet programs offered to students, including the Academy of Mathematics, Science and Applied Technology, the Academy of Finance, and the Teacher Education Academy. These programs focus on specific areas of study pertaining to future career work and are available to students as they move through their high school coursework. They also offer extra hours of school instruction and a reduced student to teacher ratio, as well as collaboration between Ed W. Clark High School and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and the College of Southern Nevada to offer college credit. Ms. McLee is a shining example of how devotion to a program can truly impact the lives of students. Her accolade is well deserved.

I am excited to see a local teacher bring recognition to both Nevada and to Ed W. Clark High School by receiving a prestigious national award. Ms. McLee should be proud to call herself a top national magnet teacher. I ask my colleagues to join me and all Nevadans in congratulating Ms. McLee for her steadfast effort and honorable representation of Nevada.●

CONGRATULATING GERMAN RODRIGUEZ

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I congratulate Reno Police Officer German Rodriguez on receiving the Congressional Badge of Bravery, a well-deserved award after his extreme act of courage. On October 16, 2013, an armed robbery took place at a Bank of America in Reno, resulting in the death of a patron. Mr. Rodriguez was off duty and unarmed when he witnessed the occurrence at the bank, but he called 911 and followed the suspect after he had fled the scene. Mr. Rodriguez then apprehended and disarmed the suspect at a nearby bus station to be sure the situation would not escalate or result in the suspect getting away. Responding officers arrived shortly after to take the suspect into custody. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Mr. Rodriguez for his unwavering commitment to protecting his community in both this instance and throughout his tenure as an officer.

Mr. Rodriguez began his career as a Reno police officer in 1998 and has remained committed to his job and his community ever since. His dedication to keeping those around him safe is commendable, and his commitment to service above self is a shining example of heroism. The Reno community is safer because of Mr. Rodriguez.

The Congressional Badge of Bravery is awarded to law enforcement officers who have sustained a physical injury or were at great risk of physical injury while protecting their community. Mr. Rodriguez's actions more than warrant this prestigious award and represent only the greatest of Nevada's values, including a sense of community and an obligation to help others. His actions prove that he consistently makes the safety and security of others a top priority and is always ready to respond at a moment's notice. He is a role model to future generations of Reno police officers and officers across the country.

During his tenure, Mr. Rodriguez has demonstrated immeasurable bravery, commitment to excellence, and dedication to the highest standards of the police force. I am both humbled and honored by his service and am proud to call him a fellow Nevadan. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Rodriguez for all of his accomplishments and wish him well in all of his future endeavors.●

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION 50TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor the 50th anniversary of the Appalachian Regional Commission, a vital partnership that has created abundant opportunities for families and communities in my State of West Virginia and across the Appalachian region for five decades. Since its establishment in 1965, the Appalachian Regional Commission, known as ARC, has spurred job creation, economic growth and infrastructure improvements, which have helped build a stronger Appalachia. I am proud of all that ARC has done to help improve the region, and I am committed to continue working with the agency to further enhance our communities.

Over the past 50 years, the rural communities of Appalachia have faced unique challenges. After the American industrial revolution, which was driven largely by Appalachian coal and other regional resources, these communities experienced a rapid economic downturn. Since then, ARC has partnered with local and State leaders to make critical investments that have helped rebuild and revitalize the region.

Located in the heart of Appalachia, which is home to more than 25 million Americans, my home State of West Virginia has benefitted considerably from the contributions of ARC. Through its initiatives, ARC has played a critical role in helping lift West Virginians out of economic turmoil and homelessness. Prior to ARC's establishment, 34.6 percent of West Virginians were living in poverty. Today, that number has been cut in half to 17.6 percent. This is telling of ARC's commitment to the strength of our citizens in rural and economically distressed areas.

Also, by investing in our highways, railroads, bridges, as well as water and sewer systems, ARC funding in West Virginia has helped lay the foundation for economic growth in the region. Of West Virginia's 409.6 total eligible miles, 360.4 are open to traffic thanks to help from ARC. Additionally, ARC has made 2,133 strategic nonhighway grants in West Virginia, totaling \$387.6 million. These initiatives are vital to improving the quality of life for our residents and growing tourism and business in the State.

The agency's investments have undoubtedly been a source of economic vitality and an engine for job growth. All of the Mountain State's 55 counties added employment at a 4.2-percent faster pace and per capita income at a 5.5-percent faster pace than similar counties that did not receive ARC investments. Per capita income has increased from 71.6 percent of the national average in 1969 to 79.4 percent today.

Nonetheless, there is still work to be done to bring Appalachia to parity with the rest of the Nation. We must continue to invest in the region's educational programs, because the long-

term economic success of this region truly rests in the hands of a well-informed, educated and skilled workforce. We must also focus on working together to fight rampant drug use and abuse, a national epidemic that proliferates in the pockets of Appalachia. And of equal importance, we need to continue to invest in industrial infrastructure, broadband expansion, business development, health care, and workforce training.

While Governor, I had the honor of serving as the cochair for the State's representative of ARC and now, as a U.S. Senator from Appalachia, I continue to be a strong supporter of the program. ARC has proven over the past 50 years that a partnership between the Federal, State, and local government can work together to help improve the economic success in regions across West Virginia and Appalachia. It is truly an honor to recognize them today for their work to improve and develop this special American region.●

REMEMBERING STEVE PIERCE, II

● Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, it is with great sadness that Cindy and I would like to express our sincere condolences to our friend, Arizona State Senator Steve Pierce, his wife, Joan, and their entire family on the loss of their son, Stephen Morris Pierce II. Sadly, Steve leaves behind his wife Amilyn and their unborn child.

I wish there were a way to make sense of such a sudden and tragic loss. It is impossible for Steve's family and friends to understand how someone with such a bright future could be taken from them so quickly.

Raised on one of the last great cattle ranches in Arizona, Steve's imagination thrived. He was an all-American boy who enjoyed fishing, football, and baseball. His love of the ocean took Steve to San Diego State University, where he studied computer information and decision systems. Always adventurous and playful, Steve found a way to turn play into work when he started working in the online-gaming industry. He was able to fulfill his dream of starting his own online-gaming company.

Steve touched the lives of many and will never be forgotten. His generosity of spirit will always be treasured. We can take comfort in the fact that those who loved him will keep his memory alive when they remember his easy laugh and acts of kindness.

Cindy and I express our deepest sympathies for the tragic loss of such a fine son, husband, brother, and friend. Through this difficult time, the Pierce family will remain in our thoughts and prayers.●

DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY SESQUICENTENNIAL

● Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, today I recognize the Detroit Public Library's Sesquicentennial. For 150 years, the