

bravery, his dedication to our Nation's servicemembers, and his unwavering commitment to serving others. I am proud to rise today to recognize Mr. Williams and congratulate him on the christening of the USNS *Hershel "Woody" Williams*.

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH, THE FOUNDER OF THE BAHÁ'I FAITH

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I am very pleased to draw attention today to the 200th anniversary of the birth of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i Faith.

The Baha'i Faith has over 5 million followers around the world, including over 2,000 in Tennessee. Baha'is come from virtually every racial, ethnic, national, tribal, and linguistic background on the planet.

On October 22, 2017, Baha'i communities across the United States and around the world will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Baha'u'llah—the founder of the Baha'i Faith—and celebrate his life and his teachings.

Baha'u'llah was born to a noble family in 1817 in Persia, modern-day Iran. As a young man, he was known for his charity and service to others and was called the father of the poor. In 1844, he founded the Baha'i Faith, a new and independent religion with its own scriptures, laws, teachings, and practices.

Baha'u'llah proclaimed a message of justice, unity, and peace. This message called for, among other things, the equality of women and men, an end to racial prejudice, universal education, interfaith harmony, and international cooperation. As a result of his teachings, Baha'u'llah was imprisoned and exiled for over 40 years by the Persian and Ottoman empires.

Despite the injustice and oppression he faced throughout his life, Baha'u'llah continued to promote a message of peace and unity based upon harmony within the human race. In every place to which he was banished, he touched the lives of all those around him. Even some of his opponents, after meeting him, became his friends and admirers.

Today Baha'is in Iran are still persecuted for their faith, and human rights experts have called their situation one of the clearest and most severe cases of religious persecution in the world.

The Baha'i Faith first arrived in the U.S. over 120 years ago. Baha'is now live in every State of the Union, including Tennessee, where the community has grown to over 2,000 members.

Wherever they live, Baha'is champion the principles that Baha'u'llah proclaimed. They strive to build a better world by being good citizens, serving their communities, and working side by side with others to promote the common good.

On this important occasion, I congratulate the Baha'i community of

Tennessee and across the United States on the bicentennial of the birth of Baha'u'llah.

REMEMBERING EVELYNE J. VILLINES

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the passing of disability rights pioneer and my longtime friend, Ms. Evelyne Villines. Ever since I first met Evelyne during my early years in the Iowa House of Representatives, I knew her to be a fierce advocate on behalf of those with disabilities. She had an outstanding work ethic and never stopped campaigning for those with disabilities to be recognized for their abilities and not by what others saw as their limitations.

Thanks to people like Evelyne, our society has made a lot of progress in this area. Evelyne's tireless work earned her recognition on both the State and national levels as an inductee into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame and the national Hall of Fame for Persons with Disabilities. Evelyne's efforts were recognized as paving the way for passage for the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

She served on numerous commissions and joined the board of SourceAmerica in its infancy, leading the company to become one of the largest employers of people with disabilities in the Nation. Evelyne's advocacy and resulting accomplishments have opened the doors of opportunity for people with disabilities.

I am honored to stand before you in recognizing Evelyne for her lifelong commitment to service. Evelyne's legacy will live on for years to come through the countless individuals who will continue to benefit from her life's work.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT HIGDON, JR.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Robert Higdon, Jr., and congratulate him on his appointment as the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

Bobby earned both his law degree and undergraduate degree from Wake Forest University and has a decorated career in public service and in private practice. Prior to law school, he worked for then-Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole and for Senator John East. Upon graduating from law school, Bobby served as a law clerk to Judge Eugene H. Phillips on the North Carolina Court of Appeals. After working for several years in private practice, he began a successful career as a Federal prosecutor.

From 1991 until 2015, Bobby served in the U.S. Attorney's Office and the U.S. Department of Justice in a number of roles, including chief of the criminal division in the Eastern District of North Carolina. He has vast experience investigating, prosecuting, and advising on criminal cases, ranging from violent crime and drug trafficking to white collar and public integrity crimes.

Aside from his sterling legal career, Bobby is an active member of his community, inspiring and helping others. He serves his church as a volunteer and a Sunday School teacher, and he has mentored the next generation of lawyers by coaching in various mock trial competitions. His example reminds us that our roles as public servants extend beyond the office.

It was an honor to recommend Bobby Higdon to President Trump. Anyone who works with him knows he is a dedicated professional who has extensive legal knowledge and expertise. In addition, he is widely respected in the law enforcement community, and these relationships will be incredibly valuable as he takes on this important role. Bobby understands the challenges and issues facing North Carolina, and I know that he will continue to lead the U.S. Attorney's Office with dignity and respect.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO NORMAN JOSEPH

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to commend Norman Joseph of Jackson, a leader in Mississippi athletics, on his induction into the Belhaven University Sports Hall of Fame this month. Coach Joseph is a Vicksburg native who played quarterback and defensive back at Mississippi State University. As a coach in the nearly four decades since, he has delivered a tradition of excellence, success, and Christian character to student-athletes in Mississippi and across the country.

Norman Joseph has coached on every level of 4-year college football. Starting and rebuilding teams became a hallmark of his career. He built the Belhaven University football program from the ground up and served as its inaugural head coach. Coach Joseph launched Belhaven's recruiting program, designed its uniforms, and consulted on the creation of practice facilities and a new athletic complex. Under his leadership, the football program experienced immediate success and achieved a Top 25 ranking for 6 consecutive weeks during its second season.

Coach Joseph has coached at three Jackson-area colleges. In addition to Belhaven, he served as quarterbacks coach at Millsaps College and head coach at Mississippi College in Clinton for nine seasons.

At Mississippi College, Coach Joseph took a program in decline and established a winning culture. Under his guidance, the team had an eight-win season in only 3 years. Within 5 years, the team won the conference championship and went to the second round of the Division III playoffs. Coach Joseph took his team to NCAA Top 25 National Rankings in scoring offense, total offense, passing offense, rushing