

Iancu from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. We heard about what is going well and about some of the difficulties facing the Office, as well as other intellectual property stakeholders. As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I will continue to embrace my role as a promoter of intellectual property rights, innovation, and ultimately American jobs.

This World Intellectual Property Day, it is important to once again recognize the significance of our Nation's robust system of intellectual property protection and enforcement. As we recognize the positive impacts IP has on innovation, let's continue to find ways to work together to ensure its protection against infringement. We want the United States to maintain its position as the most innovative and creative country in the world.

REMEMBERING VEL PHILLIPS

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, today I wish to honor Vel Phillips, who was born Velvlea Hortense Rodgers in 1923 in Milwaukee and passed away on April 17, 2018, at the age of 95. Vel was a civil rights leader and a pioneer in social justice and fair housing who left an indelible mark on the State of Wisconsin.

Vel earned a national oratory scholarship from the Black Elks to attend Howard University, where she earned her bachelor's degree in 1946. She returned to her home State of Wisconsin to attend the University of Wisconsin—Madison Law School, becoming the first Black woman to graduate from the school, just one in a long series of significant firsts for Vel.

Following law school, Vel made it her life's work to advocate for social justice and equal rights. She became actively involved in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, working for political, social, educational, and economic equality for people of color.

Vel was elected to the Milwaukee Common Council in 1956, not only as the first African American, but also as the first woman. Her election sent shockwaves through the all-White, all-male council. Rather than welcoming her to her new position, her colleagues refused to share an office with her and suggested she join the aldermen's wives club instead of the council. A firm believer in polite persistence, Vel took her seat quietly but proudly. She quickly went on to become an advocate not only for the people in her district, but for every African American in the city. She later said, "No matter where they lived, I was their alderman and they called me."

Vel would go on to accomplish many more firsts. In 1971, she became the first woman judge in Milwaukee County, as well as the first African-American judge in the State of Wisconsin. In 1978, she made history again as the first woman and minority elected secretary of State in Wisconsin.

In spite of all these significant firsts, Vel Phillips is perhaps best known for initiating the long but ultimately successful fight to outlaw housing discrimination in Milwaukee. Until the late 1960s, landlords freely refused to sell or rent property to people of color. Even if homeowners wanted to sell property to people of color, banks routinely rejected their loan applications. As a result, African Americans lived almost exclusively in one run-down neighborhood on Milwaukee's near north side.

In 1962, Vel introduced the city's first ordinance to prohibit discrimination in housing. The council promptly rejected it by a vote of 18 to 1. She tried three additional times over the next 6 years with the same result. The Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council and The Rev. James Groppi took up her cause in 1967 and organized 200 consecutive nights of protests in support of her ordinance. When her colleagues adopted a watered-down version of an open housing ordinance in an attempt to make the protests stop, Vel told them, "Thanks for nothing. You are very much too late and very much too little."

The council finally passed a strong open housing ordinance in 1968, after the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spurred Congress to pass the national Fair Housing Act.

Following her retirement from public office, Vel remained involved in important causes, speaking up when she saw injustice, protesting when necessary, and educating students from all over the world.

Public servant, trailblazer, activist, icon, and pioneer are all words that only begin to describe Vel Phillips' contributions to the fight for equality in Wisconsin. While history will forever remember her for her string of momentous firsts, her greatest legacy will be the many women who run for elective office or the countless African Americans who live throughout the city thanks to the seemingly insurmountable barriers she shattered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING THE VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S BOWLING TEAM

• Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, as a fellow Commodore, I would like to congratulate the Vanderbilt University women's bowling team on winning the National Collegiate Athletic Association, NCAA, championship, the second national championship for the women's bowling program and the fourth national championship in Commodore athletic history.

John Williamson, the head coach of this program for 14 years, has done an excellent job of training and guiding these exceptional student-athletes. He has worked hard to build this program from its inception in 2004 into one that annually contends for championships.

Vanderbilt is a very special university, one that produces student-athletes of exceptional character and integrity. These are student-athletes that have pride in themselves and their school, in both academics and athletics. In fact, Kristin Quah of the bowling team earned the NCAA's Elite 90 Award for having the highest grade point average at the championships, a 3.953, while double majoring in biomedical and electrical engineering. Seven members of the team were recently named to the spring sports All SEC Academic Honor Roll.

I am filled with pride for my alma mater, and I wish the bowling team and all of Vanderbilt University the best.

This achievement would not have been possible without the hard work, talent, and teamwork of the following outstanding student-athletes: Kelsey Abrahamsen, Maria Bulanova, Samantha Gainor, Bryanna Leyen, Jordan Newham, Ariana Perez, Lauren Potechin, Kristin Quah, Emily Rigney, Katie Stark, and Adel Wahner.

These student-athletes were coached and mentored by a dedicated team of coaches and athletic department staff, including: head coach John Williamson; assistant coach and former All-American Josie Earnest Barnes; associate athletic director and sport administrator Kevin Colon; strength and conditioning coach Darren Edgington; facility manager Kenny Moore; academic counselor Candice Johnson; athletic trainer Alda Burston; and volunteer sports information director Rod Williamson.

I would also like to acknowledge chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos; vice chancellor and athletics director David Williams II; deputy athletics director Candice Storey Lee; and senior associate athletics directors Lori Alexander; and Martin Salamone for their vision and leadership.

Anchor Down, Commodores. We are proud of you.●

TRIBUTE TO MECALLEN GARNEAU

• Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Mecallen for his hard work as an intern in my Sheridan office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Mecallen is a native of Sheridan. He is a freshman at Sheridan College, where he is studying occupational therapy and health science. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Mecallen for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●