

Supreme Court. He helped integrate the Chicago Housing Authority and the public schools of Harrisburg, IL. In the South, he successfully challenged an amendment to the Alabama State constitution that used a “constitutional knowledge” test to deny African Americans the right to vote. He also helped to end the exclusion of African Americans from jury duty in Mississippi.

In 1951, 5 years after arriving in Chicago, George Leighton was indicted by a Cook County grand jury. His “crime”? Telling his clients, an African-American family, that they had a legal right to rent an apartment in the then all-White Chicago suburb of Cicero. Enraged neighbors rioted, nearly burning the apartment building nearly to the ground.

The county grand jury indicted George Leighton on charges of conspiracy to incite riot and lower property values. Judge Leighton was represented by his friend, Thurgood Marshall, and the indictment was quickly dismissed.

Not long after that, with the support of Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley, George Leighton was elected as a Cook County judge. He was later elevated to the State appellate court, the first African American to sit on that bench.

He served as a Federal judge from 1976 until 1989. He would have preferred to stay on the bench, but his beloved wife, Virginia, had suffered several strokes some time before. Judge Leighton’s insistence to provide her with round-the-clock medical care had depleted the family’s savings, and he needed to make more money.

He returned to private law practice, joining the Chicago firm of Neal & Leroy. His new partner, Langdon Neal, was the son of Judge Leighton’s old friend. Judge Leighton could have joined any law firm in Chicago, but he chose once again to go with a small, minority-owned firm. That was important to him.

Langdon Neal tells the story about walking into the office early one morning to find the lights already on. He looked into Judge Leighton’s office, saw him sprawled out on the floor, and feared the worst. Before his law partner could say a word, Judge Leighton pushed himself up and did 10 more push-ups. He was taking a rest during his morning exercises.

At 77, he still had a lot of fight still in him. For the next 22 years, he would practice law, looking and sounding like a man decades younger. At 97, his hearing, vision, and cholesterol were all still perfect, and he was only 3 pounds heavier than when he was released from Active military duty.

As a Cook County judge in 1965, Judge Leighton acquitted two Latino men accused of beating and slashing a Chicago police officer. Judge Leighton believed that the officers who testified against the men were lying, and he told them so.

The decision touched off a public furor and angry calls to remove Judge

Leighton from the bench. A Chicago Tribune reporter asked the judge if he feared for his safety. No, Judge Leighton quipped, “I’m making careful plans to die of old age in office.”

Six years ago this month, June 2012, the Cook County courthouse where Judge Leighton acquitted those men, the courthouse where he first made his name as a civil rights lawyer in the 1940s and ’50s and where he began his career as a judge, was renamed in his honor. “26th and Cal” is now the Judge George N. Leighton Criminal Court Building. It is one of many tributes in his honor.

In 2005, the main post office in his boyhood home of New Bedford, MA, was renamed in his honor. In 2008, the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission established the Honorable George N. Leighton Justice Award. Judge Leighton accepted these and other honors with grace, humility, and a bit of puzzlement. He was always genuinely surprised that people found his life worth celebrating in such ways.

There was only one honor that Judge Leighton wanted for himself at the end of his life. His final wish was to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Judge Leighton died in New Bedford on June 6, the 74th anniversary of D-Day. In a reflection of Judge Leighton’s distinguished military service, his place in American history, and the esteem in which he was held by so many, Arlington National Cemetery has approved his burial in those hallowed grounds.

Sometime in the not-too-distant future, Judge George Leighton, the son of immigrants who bent the moral arc of history, will be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. He will rest there in honor among such other American heroes as his old friend, Thurgood Marshall, General Benjamin O. Davis, the commander of the Tuskegee Airmen and the first African-American general in the U.S. Air Force, and other members of the Army’s 93rd Infantry Division, with whom Judge Leighton fought with in World War II. It is a fitting final tribute to a great man who fought so long and in so many ways to preserve and defend freedom and liberty for all.

I am honored to have known him, and Loretta and I want to offer our condolences to his family, especially to his daughters, Virginia and Barbara, and their husbands, to Judge Leighton’s five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, and to his friends and colleagues.

ENERGY AND WATER, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, AND MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS BILL AND THE AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION BILL

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I wish to discuss votes on final passage of H.R. 5895 and the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2.

I was not in Washington on Monday because I was visiting Senator JOHN MCCAIN at his ranch in Arizona.

The Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2019, H.R. 5895, is the result of a commendable bipartisan negotiation process led by Chairman SHELBY and Ranking Member LEAHY of the Appropriations Committee. The bill includes strong funding for ongoing work on Bureau of Reclamation rural water projects like the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System that will benefit approximately 300,000 people in the southwest Minnesota, southeast South Dakota, and northwest Iowa regions. The bill also includes legislation I led with Senator TILLIS to create a center of excellence within the Department of Veterans Affairs to address the health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits. Had I been in Washington, I would have voted in favor of its passage.

The Agriculture and Nutrition Act, H.R. 2, passed the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee by a vote of 20 to 1. The bill will provide critical investments in communities in Minnesota and will provide much-needed certainty for our farmers and ranchers. The bill includes provisions I championed to continue investments in renewable energy programs, create an animal disease and disaster program, and provide support for our dairy farmers. Had I been in Washington, I would have voted in favor of the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the bill.

Thank you.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a statement from the National Sheriff’s Association about border security and immigration reform be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL SHERIFF’S ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT ON BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION REFORM

The Government Affairs Committee of the National Sheriffs’ Association recommends to the Board that Sheriffs stand together to affirm that securing of the borders of the United States and reform of the Immigration System are the top legislative issues for the Association.

Sheriffs pledge that they will commit their influence and some financial resources of the Association to affecting a resolution to these issues.

The National Sheriffs’ Association recognizes and supports results-based solutions that address or solve the multitude of challenges that ineffective border security has caused our nation and our communities.

Further, the Committee recommends that the Association vigorously supports any legislation that includes:

Support for following the Rule of Law for the legal immigration process;

Makes the Nation’s borders secure through use of physical barriers, technology and increased manpower of the Customs & Border Patrol and ICE;