

and Watts says he is honored to be counted among their ranks.

He considers the countless people whose stories he has shared with his broadcast audiences through the years and says it is those stories about people that he enjoys the most about what he does.

"I really care about the people I talk about and the people I do stories on," notes Watts, who celebrates his 25th year with WKDZ come August. "I really love to tell the story of people. It's nothing about me, but about the people you meet, the average common people who are wonderful people."

Some of the stories hurt, the one about the murders of three children in 2008 in Roaring Springs, for example, or more recently, about the murders four years ago of Trigg Countian Lindsey Champion, his wife and daughter.

Champion had been a listener as well as a guest of Watts' Morning Ag Report and was just "a genuinely nice man," Watts recalls. He has fond memories of Champion, who had been retired from the Farm Credit Services office in Hopkinsville and was active in his family's Champion Farms in Cadiz.

Through the years, Watts has gained an affinity, a closeness, with the people he speaks with in his capacity as a broadcaster, the folks who are the subjects of the stories that are his livelihood. There are those who know him even though he may actually have never met them before, Watts muses.

Worth it every day.

They feel like they're a part of my life and I'm a part of their life," observes Watts, who is the second-longest tenured employee at WKDZ. "And that's what makes it worth it every day."

Seated recently inside the studios at the Cadiz station, Watts recalls how Embry, a longtime radio man at WHOP in Hopkinsville, and colleague Bob McGaughey at rival WKOA, first piqued his interest in the medium. The older men frequently interviewed Watts, then a teenager showing his family's cattle and sheep at the Western Kentucky State Fair, for their farm programs.

Watts found the process an intriguing one "Where I really got my interest was watching Dink Embry," Watts explains. "What Dink Embry did on the radio fascinated me."

He eventually began hanging out with Embry, helped him set up equipment and "enjoyed seeing what was going on and learning from him."

He began working part-time at WHOP in 1985 or 1986, conducting farm interviews for the station. Graduating from high school in 1986, he went on to Hopkinsville Community College before transferring to Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, where he received a degree in mass communications with a minor in animal science. Were it not for radio, Watts says, a career in animal genetics would have captured his attention.

He continued to work at WHOP throughout college and, after graduating in 1990, began his career with the station, working as a disc jockey and announcer. For a brief time, he left radio for the insurance business.

But he discovered sales was not for him and so, in 1993, Embry made a phone call on Watts' behalf and spoke with owner D.J. Everett at WKDZ.

Watts came on board in August of that same year, just four months after Cindy Allen Lax, who is now the station's senior marketing specialist.

Watts says he likely is one of the few people who do not have a contract.

"D.J. never had me sign a contract," he recalls of the agreement handwritten on a piece of paper that signified his hiring at the radio station.

Everett, he notes, had great expectations of his new employee and was tough, but he

also became a great friend and mentor to Watts. From Everett, Watts learned a "tremendous amount of knowledge" that taught him how to look for news, how to gather it and how to report the news to listeners.

In his early days with the station, Watts wrote his news on a typewriter in the newsroom, and, at a time when the station had only four employees, he also helped answer the telephones and did things in the business office.

"In those days, you did everything," Watts recalls.

Agriculture is big.

At the time, he said he didn't address agriculture much but did incorporate it into his regular newscasts, something he made a point of doing because "agriculture is such a big industry here," he explains.

In 2007, Watts received the Kentucky Farm Bureau Communications Award, recognizing his efforts to highlight the work that farmers do while also helping others understand the importance of agriculture.

His Morning Ag Report with Alan Watts began the following year, its beginnings taking shape with the germ of an idea after he attended a meeting.

The Ag Edge website was developed not long after the morning show.

Watts and David Fourqurean, an ag extension agent in McLean County, were returning from a Farm Bureau meeting, and Watts decided WKDZ should do something, given agriculture's impact in the area and his knowledge of it.

The program airs from 5 to 6 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Fourqurean and other agents have been frequent guests on the popular program. Watts interviews local farmers, features agriculture-related things going on in the community and highlights other current news events.

People comment about how the program reminds them of growing up on the farm, and they talk about how much they enjoy the conversation.

Watts is mindful of listeners who live on the farm and elsewhere, and for those who are not involved in agriculture, there's a need to explain what that load of tobacco they're following down the highway means to them, he notes.

This past January Watts saw President Donald J. Trump when the president was a featured speaker at the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention in Nashville; Trump was interesting to see, noted Watts, who said the president connected so well with his rural audience on that day.

"He reminded me a lot of (former President Ronald) Reagan, with less finesse," Watts said of the 40th president known as "the great communicator."

Watts saw Reagan speak at Western's Diddle Arena, and he recalled the president's reaction when a balloon popped during his presentation.

Reagan, who was shot by attempted assassin John Hinckley Jr. in 1981, ducked upon hearing the noise and called out "Oh, you missed me."

In the ensuing years, Watts also saw former presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush and interviewed former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. These days, Watts is a frequent guest on RFD-TV, where he shares what is going on in agriculture in western Kentucky with viewers.

He has taken over as host and producer of Kentucky Farm Bureau's "Across Kentucky" broadcast and, in Cadiz, he co-hosts the Trigg County Farm Tour.

Earlier this year, Watts was named the 2018 Christian County Friend of Agriculture by the Christian County Agribusiness Association.

He notes that there are so many neat people to meet in agriculture, and Watts, who rises early every morning to prepare for his Morning Ag Report, declares that he looks forward to those early mornings every day.

"I don't think there's anything I'd rather do," he says of his love of agriculture and of the people he meets in his local community. "It's still fun and exciting every day."

Watts and his wife Susan Watts have a daughter, 10-year-old Jennie Watts, who continues to work on her family's farm in south Christian County.

SOUTH SUDAN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to bring attention to the ongoing conflict in South Sudan, and call on the administration to take further action to help find a sustainable diplomatic solution.

Today, July 9, is South Sudan's Independence Day. Instead of celebrating the seventh birthday of the world's newest nation, we find ourselves lamenting the human costs of South Sudan's 4-and-a-half year old civil war. The situation has created the largest refugee crisis in Africa. An estimated 4.5 million people have been forcibly displaced. An estimated 300,000 people may have been killed since 2013, but the death toll could be far, far greater.

The humanitarian situation is dire. Seven million people—60 percent of the population—require humanitarian assistance. Insecurity has disrupted farming cycles, grazing patterns, and trade routes; local markets have collapsed. Food prices have skyrocketed. Over 1 million South Sudanese children are facing acute malnutrition, and parts of South Sudan may be experiencing famine. While the United States, along with other donors, has taken measures to help those in need, our efforts have been thwarted on a variety of fronts. Relief supplies have been repeatedly looted. Government restrictions and insecurity hinder relief efforts.

The war has been characterized by horrific human rights violations. The U.N. Mission in South Sudan reports that, from the outset of the conflict, "Civilians were not only caught up in the violence, they were directly targeted, often along ethnic lines." The U.N. Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan suggests that ethnic cleansing has occurred. Forces on both sides have reportedly engaged in widespread sexual violence. An attack on a residence for aid workers in Juba in July 2016, during which Americans were assaulted and a local journalist killed, highlighted the dangers facing aid workers and other expatriates. According to the U.N., over 100 aid workers have been killed since the war began. Hundreds of attacks on humanitarian workers were reported in 2017. U.N. officials assert that targeted attacks against civilians, humanitarians, and U.N. personnel in South Sudan by government and opposition forces may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Just last month, Reuters reported that the ceasefire monitoring group set up as part of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan known as the ARCSS has evidence that South Sudan's army has massacred civilians, burned children alive, and gang-raped women since the ceasefire agreement reached in December 2017.

In the worst incident detailed in the reports, a group of 200 government soldiers attacked the village of Nyatot in Upper Nile state on February 12. Civilian survivors interviewed said they were "shooting randomly at everything and everybody." Twenty-two civilians were killed and 72 wounded. South Sudan has denied targeting civilians and called the reports, compiled in the last 3 months, exaggerated. Despite pressure from the international community, the reports have yet to be released publicly. If these reports are true, perpetrators must be held accountable.

The U.N. Security Council ramped up its threats to impose sanctions against six key individuals in South Sudan if the fighting continued and no compromise was reached by the end of June. Under this most recent threat of sanctions, President Salva Kiir and rival leader Riek Machar held their first meeting since the 2015 deal collapsed in mid-2016. They have signed yet another agreement and imposed a ceasefire, but before the ink was dry, there were allegations that government forces violated the ceasefire and reports that Machar's group—the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition—was opposed to key elements contained therein, putting the agreement at risk.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development, IGAD, also said it was developing punitive measures against violators of the ceasefire agreement, although it is uncertain whether this will materialize in a region that has been reticent to impose sanctions.

The United States played a key role in helping create the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that laid the groundwork for the 2011 referendum on self-determination, through which the people of South Sudan overwhelmingly voted for independence. We have a role to play in helping the people of South Sudan secure their future and find peace. The administration has taken some steps, including imposing targeted sanctions on individuals who threaten the peace, security, or stability of South Sudan, a bilateral arms embargo, and Commerce Department actions against South Sudanese companies in the oil sector. USAID Administrator Mark Green traveled to the country in September 2017 and pressed for a ceasefire and humanitarian access. U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley visited Juba and Sudanese refugees in October 2017 and has pursued Security Council sanctions on those who are obstacles to peace. Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence,

Sigal Mandelker, was in east Africa last month, where she urged countries to stop illicit money flows from South Sudan into neighboring countries. These actions are welcome. However, such engagements have been too sporadic to generate sustained diplomatic momentum. Millions of South Sudanese continue to suffer.

Despite what seem like positive developments in recent weeks, if past is prologue, we should all be very concerned about whether the agreement will hold. We must position ourselves to support it if it does not collapse, but we must also be prepared to help find a way to a sustainable peace if it does. High-level U.S. engagement has proven decisive in achieving peace in the past; it could make all the difference now, either in helping support this latest agreement or in forging a new diplomatic solution.

I urge the administration to redouble its efforts on South Sudan by taking the following steps: Consider the appointment of a special envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. Addressing the conflict in South Sudan will take concerted time effort and attention. If the Democratic Republic of Congo, northeastern Nigeria, the Central African Republic, and Mali weren't all in some form of crisis or another, our newly confirmed Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs might be able to devote the necessary time and resources towards the shuttle diplomacy and intense negotiations required to end the conflict in South Sudan, but time is a luxury that we don't have. During his confirmation hearing to be Secretary of State in April, Mike Pompeo committed to reviewing the utility of assigning a special envoy to South Sudan. When he appeared before the committee to defend the administration's Fiscal Year 2019 budget request in May, Secretary Pompeo indicated that he had not yet reviewed the issue. Mr. Secretary, the people of South Sudan have suffered long enough. It is time for a decision.

Develop a strategy, in coordination with partners and allies, for incentivizing each of the member states of IGAD, the east African regional body leading negotiations, to take constructive and decisive actions aimed at ending the conflict. IGAD's efforts to date have been commendable, but it is clear that, when it comes to developing and implementing meaningful consequences for nonadherence to past agreements, competing bilateral interests of member states have overtaken effective collective action by the body. Unless member states are willing to place peace in South Sudan above narrow parochial interests, IGAD will continue to fail, and the people of South Sudan will continue to pay the price. IGAD should lead the international community in imposing an arms embargo and targeted sanctions, including a travel ban and an asset freeze if this last initiative fails. Member states should stop any and all ma-

terial support they may be providing to the government in Juba, and we must make clear that failure to do so will affect our bilateral relationship with each of the countries in IGAD.

Improve coordination with allies. The other members of the Troika were taken by surprise by our announcement in May that we are reviewing our assistance to South Sudan. Administration officials consistently say that America first does not mean America alone. If that is the case, we need to stop taking unilateral action. We should ensure that our partners—if they really are our partners—are apprised of actions in advance of our announcing them. I am not suggesting we give them veto authority over U.S. policy. I am suggesting that we work in concert with them so that our actions have more impact. If we consult, we might just find that they want to cooperate with us.

Finally, we should maintain pressure in the Security Council. I am pleased that Ambassador Haley has continued to pursue U.N. sanctions, and I support her efforts. It is evident that the one thing that those in power in Juba care about is protecting their self-interests. Let's stop the supply of arms and materiel and hit the parties to the conflict where it hurts: their pocket books.

Mr. President, I truly hope the news coming out of the region is an indicator that things are finally moving in the right direction, but there is ample room for doubt. I urge the administration to better prepare to help the people of South Sudan reach the goals at the birth of their new nation, tragically derailed by civil war and an indifference of their leaders to their suffering.

TRIBUTE TO JASON SEAMAN

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today, I rise to recognize and honor the extraordinary courage of Noblesville West Middle School teacher Jason Seaman. Jason's actions on May 25 to protect his classroom of students during a shooting at the school in Noblesville, IN, exemplified his selflessness, dedication to his job, and the deep commitment he has to his students, the school, and the entire community.

Jason graduated in 2007 from Mahomet-Seymour High School in Mahomet, IL, where he was a star athlete. He went on to play college football at Southern Illinois University and earned a degree in elementary education. Prior to teaching at Noblesville West, Jason was an instructional assistant at Harrison Parkway Elementary School in Fishers, IN. In 2014, he was hired at Noblesville West, where he currently teaches science to seventh graders and coaches football and track. Jason is described by his fellow teachers as a devoted colleague.

On the morning of Friday, May 25, just after 9 A.M., an armed student entered Jason's classroom and opened