As a student at Seminole Elementary School in the 1990’s, Jade participated in a weekly culture class on the Brighton Reservation to learn about Seminole history. This was her favorite class and served as an inspiration for her continued learning of Native American affairs.

Like her students, Jade is a second language learner of Creek. She believes teaching the language to her students is very important, as there are only 33 speakers of the language left in the region. She is dedicated to doing everything she can to keep the language alive for future generations.

Jade teaches Creek 1 and 2 at Pemmety Emahakv Charter School to seventh and eighth grade students. She graduated from Edison College in 2004 and was offered a job teaching Seminole history. The weekly program helped the creation of the charter school on the Bay County Tribe of Florida, and look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO BECKY PELTONEN

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Becky Peltonen, a technology teacher who has taught for 9 years prior to her tenure at Bay County’s Ignite Education Awards Celebration in front of a crowd of more than 300 people. Becky provides music education and therapy services to students at Oak Park School, the district’s center school for special needs. He is a staunch advocate for students with special needs, preferring to focus on the abilities of his students, rather than dwell on their disabilities. He views music as an engaging, motivating, and accessible medium to support his students’ academic goals.

Shane received this award at the Education Foundation of Sarasota County’s Ignite Education Awards Celebration in front of a crowd of more than 300 people. Shane provides music education and therapy services to students at Oak Park School, the district’s center school for special needs. He is a staunch advocate for students with special needs, preferring to focus on the abilities of his students, rather than dwell on their disabilities. He views music as an engaging, motivating, and accessible medium to support his students’ academic goals.

Shane’s colleagues note he uses creative teaching methods to engage his students and build trust with them. He plays songs and sings with his students to cue certain words from them. When a student’s singing and his attempt is successful, and this is part of what makes his job so worthwhile to him.

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Jade for her dedication to her students and the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO JESSICA WOOD

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Jessica Wood, the Monroe County Teacher of the Year from Key West High School in Key West, FL.

Jessica teaches Advanced Placement biology and biology and is the science department chair. Her work has an impact on the entire school as she leads the school’s recycling club efforts and serves as a sponsor for Keys to Be the Change, a school club focused on developing student character through service.

Jessica also works with members of outside agencies to read to younger students and promote substance abuse prevention outreach throughout the community. The main thing that inspires Jessica as an educator is the ability to effect positive change on her students by serving as a role model and to continue learning herself.

Jessica is active in her field, working on her pedagogy and assisting others. She has held numerous professional development trainings at her school and throughout the school district. She has been a part of the STEM fair and is also a member of the building level planning team.

I extend my best wishes to Jessica for her work as a teacher and look forward to learning of her continued success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT A. ALTENKIRCH

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, today I wish to commend Dr. Robert Altenkirch for his leadership at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Dr. Altenkirch led the university as president from 2011 to 2019. While serving in this capacity, he implemented many strategic growth initiatives and planned economic development throughout the campus and the city of Huntsville, AL.

Under Dr. Altenkirch’s leadership, UAH provided assistance in recruiting numerous corporations to north Alabama. Those corporations include Blue Origin, Aerojet, Rocketdyne, GE Aviation, and Polaris. He also spearheaded the purchase of a 58-acre business park that is adjacent to the campus and serves as a town center for the students and faculty.

Continuing to add to his legacy, Dr. Altenkirch established the D.S. Davidson Invention to Innovation business incubator. This regional initiative fosters, promotes, and facilitates the commercialization of technology-based ventures through incubation, co-working, mentorship, funding, and strategic support.

Not only did Dr. Altenkirch expand the university physically and economically, but he also contributed to the university’s growth in total enrollment over the past 5 years. By the fall of 2019, the enrollment at UAH skyrocketed by more than 10,000 students.

The average ACT score for incoming freshman reached an all-time record high at the university under Dr. Altenkirch. By fall 2018, the average score was 28.5, which is the highest among the State of Alabama’s public universities.

Studying mechanical engineering, Dr. Altenkirch earned a B.S. from Purdue University, an M.S. from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Ph.D. from Purdue. He was recognized as one of the 101 Most Influential People in the State of New Jersey in 2009, as Dr. Altenkirch served as the president of New Jersey Institute of Technology for 9 years prior to his tenure at UAH.

Dr. Altenkirch deserves the highest recognition for his outstanding leadership at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.