

where she studied telecommunications and broadcasting. In 2002, Toccara joined the Army and was assigned to the 10th Mountain Division. While she was deployed to Iraq, part of her job was operating a 50-caliber machine gun on an Army supply truck during convoy operations, a critical role to protect the convoy and thwart enemy attacks. She once told her family “her ideal situation was to go out fighting for our country.” Toccara had an opportunity to return home to Baltimore on leave during her deployment. Less than a week after redeploying to Iraq, Specialist Green was killed at the age of 23 by a roadside bomb and became Maryland’s first woman soldier killed in combat in Iraq.

Across Maryland and across the country, there are countless others like Captain Bunting, Sergeant Campbell, Specialist Green, and their families who have made the ultimate sacrifice throughout the history of this country. Their sense of duty, honor, and country defined their character and were reflective of their actions. They not only represent the best of who we are as a nation, they are examples of who we all should aspire to be.

Freedom isn’t free. The incredible courage and actions of those who have fallen have enabled our freedom and way of life to continue and at such a profound price. This weekend, I will pray for the families in Maryland, and across the United States, who have lost loved ones defending our freedom. I will also pray for the safe return of our brave men and women currently serving abroad. Let us never forget their service, and may we forever honor their sacrifice.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, each year during the month of May, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month calls us to celebrate and reflect on the rich history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. These communities draw from an incredibly diverse range of cultures, languages, and religions that all come together to make the United States a more vibrant nation. Whether as natives or as immigrants, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have long played a pivotal role in the history of the United States since even before its founding.

Congress first recognized the contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders with the introduction of a resolution in 1977 by Representatives Frank Horton of New York and Norman Mineta of California and, later, Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga, both of Hawaii. This resolution proclaimed the first 10 days of May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. It took Representative Horton’s reintroduction of a modified resolution in 1978 for Congress to pass it and for President Jimmy Carter to sign it. Presidents would then go on to issue

annual proclamations for Asian Pacific American Heritage Week until 1990, when Congress expanded Asian Pacific American Heritage Week to the entire month, and President George H. W. Bush designated May 1990 as the first Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. In 1992, congressional passage of a final resolution permanently designated the month of May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

Since the beginning, the choice of the first several days and, later, the month of May served to honor the memory of the arrival of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, as well as the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad on May 10, 1869.

The Census Bureau estimates that there are more than 20 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders currently residing in the United States, and by many accounts, they represent one of the fastest growing minority groups. Almost 7 percent of Marylanders, more than 400,000 people, identify as Asian American and Pacific Islander. Particularly in the counties surrounding Washington DC, Maryland has increasingly become home to communities of Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Indian Americans. Over the years, they have contributed substantially to making Maryland a thriving State recognized for its leadership in business, education, culture, and many other fields. Asian Pacific Americans have been and always will be an integral part of our community.

Archeological evidence indicates that humans first began to settle in the Pacific Islands, including those of Hawaii, Samoa, and Guam, which would later become part of the United States, thousands of years ago. In what was one of the first crossings of the Pacific Ocean from Asia to the Americas, Filipinos were aboard a Spanish galleon that landed in California in 1587. In the 17th century, the British East India Company brought the first South Asian Indians to the country as indentured servants. In time, the Colonies and, later, the United States would see continued influxes of immigrants from Asia and the Pacific, in addition to the arrival of the first men and women coming from China, Korea, and Japan in the 19th century. Many came as contract labor for plantations, factories, and, famously, the California Gold Rush and the Transcontinental Railroad. In the 20th century, immigration reforms coincided with the Cold War and a new wave of globalization to spur an unprecedented boom in arrivals from these countries and elsewhere in the region. As these populations continue to grow, it is crucial to recognize that Asian Pacific Americans have been in the United States for centuries. Their stories are a testament to how our Nation is one of immigrants that is made stronger, not weaker, through its diversity.

Today, many of the iconic buildings we take for granted originate in the

work of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Here in Washington DC, many might walk beside the majestic East Building of the National Gallery of Art without recognizing it to be the work of the famous architect, I. M. Pei, who passed away on May 16, 2019, at the venerable age of 102. Beginning with the Mesa Laboratory for the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Colorado, Pei built a distinguished career over several decades as an eager and ground-breaking artist. In addition to these buildings, Pei would also design the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Massachusetts, the Dallas City Hall, and countless other projects here and abroad, such as the Louvre Pyramid in Paris, France.

Throughout their history, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have been and continue to be leaders. Indeed, one of the best demonstrations of this is the pivotal role Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders played in the Civil Rights era. Contemporaneous with the movements of the 1950s and 1960s, numerous Asian American and Pacific Islander activists and organizations advocated for the equality of all races and social and economic justice. In 1969, it was Yuji Ichioka who first coined the term “Asian American” and later taught the first course on Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, in addition to founding the major advocacy group, the Asian American Political Alliance. Larry Itliong was a major figure in the American labor movement when he helped organize agricultural workers in the western United States to form the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, which would later merge with Cesar Chavez’s organization to create the United Farm Workers.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have committed themselves to serving their communities and the United States. For centuries, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have participated in almost every war the United States has fought. Although often serving in segregated units, these men and women enthusiastically fought for what had long been their country, serving as early as the War of 1812. In recent years, Asian American and Pacific Islander soldiers and support personnel have proved essential in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their sacrifices have been great; we should never forget them. For that reason, the President of the United States has awarded the Medal of Honor to numerous brave Asian American and Pacific Islander warriors.

Many also have gone on to serve as dedicated public servants. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have held elected offices at the local, State, and national levels for over a century. Leaders such as Senator Hiram Fong and Senator Daniel Akaka made history when they became the first Asian American and Native Hawaiian, respectively, to serve in the U.S. Senate. I was honored to serve alongside Senator

Daniel Inouye, who became the highest ranking Asian-American politician in our Nation's history when he became the President pro tempore of the Senate. Beyond elected office, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders constitute an indispensable portion of the civil service at all levels of government. There, too, they have clearly demonstrated the commitment they have to their community.

In addition to the many contributions made by individuals, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have also imprinted onto our society the marks of distinctive cultures. Though perhaps taken for granted today, many ubiquitous aspects of American life and identity ultimately derive from the men and women who brought pieces of their home countries with them when they came to the United States. From philosophy to religion and entertainment to cuisine, Asian and Pacific Islander cultures have helped influence and form the American way of life as we know it today.

As minorities, many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have endured persistent forms of systemic racism that still have yet to be eradicated. Historically, countless individuals were denied the same rights as other Americans and were even excluded from citizenship. Laws barred many from working in certain fields and codified school segregation and prohibitions on property and business ownership. Immigration itself became a target of exclusionary policies that prohibited immigrants of certain ethnicities from coming to the United States. Widespread xenophobia, captured best by the "Yellow Peril," dehumanized entire communities and instilled prejudice in the hearts of many Americans. This discrimination reached a peak when President Roosevelt ordered the incarceration of over 100,000 Japanese Americans in internment camps as war began with the Empire of Japan in World War II.

Although we have made much progress in recent decades, we still face persistent issues of xenophobia, underrepresentation, and discrimination. Opportunities such as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month allow us to educate all Americans and spread the stories and perspectives unique to this community. We must do all that we can to bridge the divide by supporting policies and ideas of acceptance and equality. There is still much work to be done, but with the effort of all of our community acting together, I believe we can reach our goal.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders represent more than just a demographic category. They are our neighbors and coworkers, our friends and family. They are small business owners and entrepreneurs who have helped transform our economy for the better. They are prize-winning scientists and researchers who have made countless discoveries that have advanced our knowledge. They are creative artists

and performers who have captured our emotions and introduced us to innovative concepts. In short, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders represent an essential pillar of the United States. Their story in this country reaches back to its very founding, and it will only continue to shine on for the entire world to see, for they are, above all, Americans.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, each Memorial Day we, as Americans, take time to honor the heroes who gave their lives in service to our country, from those who died in the creation of this great Nation to those who today risk their lives in the most dangerous corners of the world.

As we approach this Memorial Day, I want to take a moment to honor the heroes still among us who served in the Second World War. There are fewer than half a million of these veterans still living, and we lose more than 300 every day.

These men and women of the World War II era are truly heroes here among us. In the great battle between good and evil, these heroes advanced over rough terrain against bombs and bullets and tanks.

Today, their battle is against the unrelenting march of time and the inescapable effects of aging. For these veterans, whose valor many of us only know from history books or movies, we still have the opportunity and sacred duty to express our gratitude, so we honor them as we aspire to be greater than we are. If we desire to serve more than ourselves, we must honor them.

On this Memorial Day, I take time to draw special attention to one of these heroes, who is now hospitalized in Mississippi.

Ninety-four years ago, Thomas O'Loughlin was born in an Irish-Catholic community in New Jersey. When his country called him to war, Tom responded and made his first trip to Mississippi, courtesy of the U.S. Army, for training at Camp Shelby. He deployed to the European Theater where, in January 1944, he was captured by the Axis forces and held as prisoner of war for more than a year before liberation. Following the war, Tom served as a guard during the Nuremberg Trials of Nazi war criminals. One of the prisoners in his charge was Deputy Fuhrer Rudolf Hess.

Following the Nuremberg Trials, Tom continued serving his country in the Armed Forces, once again serving in combat with the 811th Engineer Aviation Battalion assigned to the Fifth Air Force in Korea. He returned to civilian life in 1952, eventually making his way back to Mississippi. Keeping his Jersey accent and Irish sparkle, Tom made Mississippi his home and married Rachel Pitts, a Southern belle. They settled down in Laurel, MS, and like many members of the Greatest Generation, Tom dedicated himself to

servicing his community as a sponsor for those facing addiction. Even now, he calls from his hospital bed to encourage sobriety and offer support to those who still turn to him for help.

To honor Tom O'Loughlin, I had a U.S. flag flown over the U.S. Capitol. I pray his health returns, and I ask we all offer prayers of gratitude for Tom and the other World War II veterans across our country, for they truly are heroes here among us.

TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY ABRAHAMSON

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the remarkable career and legacy of Justice Shirley Abrahamson as she retires from the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Justice Abrahamson has a long and distinguished career upholding the law on Wisconsin's highest court. Her unparalleled commitment to justice has promoted a fair and impartial judicial system while greatly contributing to the promotion of equal rights in Wisconsin.

Justice Abrahamson's exceptional career had modest beginnings in New York City. Her parents were Polish immigrants who started a grocery store in Manhattan. Her passion for the law started at the tender age of 6, when she decided she wanted to become a lawyer. She was a dedicated student, earning honors in high school and college.

Justice Abrahamson graduated magna cum laude with bachelor's degree from New York University in 1953. She earned a law degree with high distinction from Indiana University in 1956 and a doctor of law in American legal history from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1962. Before her appointment to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, Justice Abrahamson practiced law in the private sector for 14 years and was a distinguished professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School.

In 1976, Shirley Abrahamson broke the glass ceiling in Wisconsin's judicial system by becoming the first female justice on the Wisconsin Supreme Court. She again made history in 1996 when she became the first woman to serve as chief justice. After winning four elections and serving a total of 42 years, Justice Abrahamson is now the longest serving supreme court justice in State history.

Though her career is punctuated by countless achievements and distinctions, Justice Abrahamson's path to success was anything but easy. Despite a multitude of academic distinctions and an unprecedented affinity for the law, Justice Abrahamson was met with a demoralizing wave of sexism when she entered the legal profession in the 1950s. The dean of the Indiana University Law School traditionally placed the top student from each graduating class at the largest law firm in Indianapolis; yet after graduating first in her class from the university in 1956, the dean told Justice Abrahamson he could