

23 with the mission of occupying the island. They were armed in full combat kit with fixed bayonets and full magazines. They didn't know what to expect from the defeated Japanese. Nagasaki had been bombed on August 9 and was devastated. Private Brown's division, along with other troops, successfully and peacefully secured the area in short order.

Our Nation owes a great debt to the Navajo code talkers. They transmitted thousands and thousands of strategic military messages during World War II, but their code was never broken. Their skill, bravery, and commitment to country were integral to winning the war.

Private Brown, like so many of our code talkers, was humble and modest about the courage he showed during the war. While Private Brown did not consider himself a hero, I do, and so does our country, which is why he and his fellow code talkers were awarded the Congressional Silver Medal in 2001 for defending the freedoms and liberties we enjoy today.

Private Brown lived a long and productive life. After the war, he married Sarah Francis and fathered five children. He has 3 surviving children—Romero Brown, Vee Browne-Yellowhair, and Julie Brown—and 44 grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Private Brown served his country, his community, and his family. We can ask no more of anyone. He is part of an American legacy.

REMEMBERING JOHN PINTO

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to New Mexico Senator John Pinto—the longest serving member in the New Mexico Senate, who passed away May 24 of this year at the age of 94.

John Pinto was born December 15, 1924, in Lupton, AZ, near the New Mexico border, on the Navajo Nation reservation to a family of sheepherders. He was Black Sheep born for the Red Running into the Water Clan. He was the oldest of seven children and had a tough upbringing. He was raised by relatives in Lupton until he was 12 years old, when his parents took him to their home in Gallup, NM. They lived in a small wooden shack. They sometimes went hungry. To eat, at times John hunted rabbits with a sharp stick.

At that time, the Bureau of Indian Affairs picked him up and sent him to boarding school at Fort Defiance, AZ. Fort Defiance was the first boarding school on the Navajo reservation. John entered school at age 12. He spoke no English. They placed him in the beginner class, made up of 5-, 6- and 7-year-olds. A person of small stature, he would joke that was the last time he was the biggest one in the room.

John joined the Marines in 1941 and was trained as a Navajo code talker. It was intense training. Approximately 400 Navajos trained as code talkers during the war. Famously, their code,

based on the unwritten Navajo or Diné language, was never broken by the Japanese. John was ready for deployment when the war ended. He received the Congressional Silver Medal in 2001 for his service as a code talker. He was one of the last remaining surviving code talkers.

After discharge from the service, he met the love of his life, Joann Dennison Pinto, to whom he was married for 65 years until her death in 2017. Together they had two daughters, Flora and Karen, and two sons, Cecil and Galen.

After the war, he held odd jobs and then, on the advice of a BIA worker, he moved to Albuquerque to attend the University of New Mexico. He failed the English exam twice and was in tears that he wouldn't graduate and would be sent home. He hired a tutor, studied for 10 weeks, and passed. He was 39 when he received his college degree. He went on to earn a master's degree in elementary education and spent his career in the Gallup-McKinley County school system.

Senator Pinto was first elected to the Senate in 1976, representing District 3, comprised of parts of San Juan and McKinley Counties in northwest New Mexico. The Navajo Nation makes up much of the district.

In order to get to the State legislature, in January 1997, he took a bus from Gallup to Albuquerque and then began hitchhiking to the State capitol in Santa Fe. As he waited on a snowy street corner, up pulled another State senator, Manny Aragon, in his old Cadillac. Senator Aragon assumed the hitchhiker was a transient and picked him up. Senator Aragon asked his passenger why he was going to Santa Fe, and the hitchhiker replied, "I'm a state senator." And off they went to the beginning of the legislative session together.

During his 42 years in office, Senator Pinto worked tirelessly for the people of New Mexico and his district. He went into politics because he saw the overwhelming needs of his people and wanted to make a difference. He was instrumental in establishing the New Mexico Department of Indian Affairs and setting up a Tribal infrastructure fund for much needed projects for Tribes. Over the years, he pushed for dozens of projects for roads, power lines, water systems, and public buildings. He was responsible for widening U.S. Highway 491 from two to four lanes to increase public safety and commerce. During his last session in the senate, this year, he was successful in securing a \$1 million appropriation to begin a Navajo code talkers' museum. He had fought for this project for years to honor this group of brave and skillful men who were so instrumental to U.S. success in World War II.

Senator Pinto was a beloved and respected figure in the State senate. He loved to sing, and every year he sang the "Potato Song" to the chamber in his Native language—a song about

planting, growing, and harvest potatoes on the reservation.

He is not only the longest serving Native American in the New Mexico Senate, he is one of the longest serving Native legislators in the county.

On May 17 of this year, Senator Pinto was awarded the first honorary doctorate of public service to be issued by Navajo Technical University in Crownpoint, NM. He was immensely proud of that honor.

I have traveled all over the Navajo Nation with Senator Pinto. He would call me often to talk about ways to help. He cared deeply for his people and, in return, was loved by them.

Senator Pinto said, "My philosophy is to be happy, to meet people, to love people, all the races . . . they all need good water to drink, good food to eat, a good warm place to stay, and they need good jobs—that's the basic needs." Senator Pinto understood what it is like not to have the basics in life, and he worked decades to make sure his people and all New Mexicans had those basics.

Senator John Pinto: educator, statesman, Navajo code talker, brave Diné warrior, loving husband and father. He is a New Mexico legend and an American hero. I am proud to have known him and to have called him my friend.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JO McDOUGALL

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate Jo McDougall for receiving the Porter Fund's Lifetime Achievement Award. The Porter Fund's Lifetime Achievement Award is presented every 5 years to an Arkansas writer with a substantial and recognized body of work. Jo is just the fourth person to receive this honor.

Raised on her family's rice farm near DeWitt, Jo discovered her love for writing and language at a young age when her mother would read to her each night. She wrote her first poem at just 12 years old, and her father proudly displayed it on his desk. This inspired her to continue writing. Jo received an undergraduate degree in home economics from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville before returning in 1980 to pursue her master of fine arts in creative writing.

After earning her MFA, Jo taught at Pittsburg State University in Kansas for over a decade, codirecting the university's creative writing department and guiding the writing center and distinguished visiting writers program. She has taught in Arkansas at Hendrix College in Conway, AR, and at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Jo's success stretches beyond the classroom. In April of 2018, Governor Asa Hutchinson appointed her Poet Laureate of Arkansas. She has published six poetry collections and a memoir, "Daddy's Money: A Memoir of