Air Medal with oakleaf cluster, three Bronze Stars, and China’s Liberation Medal. After his tour of duty in the war overseas, he taught instructor pilots how to teach combat air tactics to pilots. He served in the Air Force Reserve and retired in 1964 as a lieutenant colonel in the Reserve.

On August 11, 1945, Wendell married Helen A. Brumbaugh at First United Methodist Church in Sioux Falls. Wendell met Helen when she was a teacher at Vermillion High School. In January of 1950, the flew to Sioux Falls from Texas and drove his father’s car to Vermillion to recruit potential Air Force pilots. Prior to speaking with students, he spoke with Helen for a few minutes in a school hallway. A month later, without further communication, Wendell sent a letter to Helen asking her to marry him. Helen replied, “I do not even know you well enough to say no.” After many months of letters, Helen said, “Yes.” They lived near Waco, Texas, where Wendell taught instructor pilots at Lackland Air Force Base, then moved to Ann Arbor, MI, for 2 years before finally returning to Sioux Falls.

Wendell and Helen had five children, Doug, Gail, Gary, Allen, and Martha, as well as eight grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

As a dedicated public servant, Wendell served in the South Dakota Senate from 1977–78 and from 1981–1982. In his spare time, he enjoys golf, international travel, pheasant hunting, fishing, and camping. He was an active member of Hope Lutheran Church, where he served as President of the congregation and Sunday school teacher. He was also a member of Peace Lutheran Church and currently attends Abiding Savior Lutheran.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Wendell Hanson for his service to our country and wish him a very happy 100th birthday, good health, and prosperity.

TRIBUTE TO PHILIP JONES

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am pleased to recognize Philip Jones, the Jackson County Teacher of the Year from Marianna High School in Marianna, FL.

To Philip, his job is to improve a student’s reading and writing skills. He believes achieving this goal requires an openness to dynamic academic and social changes. Philip designed his English class curriculum with structured plans, which builds trust in his students after the first 9 weeks of the school year. He allows them to communicate with him during class and through written assignments clearly and without negative distractions.

Philip has taught 10th grade English at Marianna High School for 6 years and serves as the chairperson for the English department. He has also received the Florida Department of Education’s High Impact recognition 3 years in a row. Philip earned his bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Florida in 2000 and his master’s degree in environmental law from Vermont Law School in 2004. I extend my best wishes to Philip for his dedication to his English students and look forward to hearing of his continued success in the coming years.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES MEARSHEIMER

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Charles Mearsheimer, the Collier County Teacher of the Year from Oakridge Middle School in Naples, FL.

Charles has taught U.S. history at Oakridge Middle School for the past 16 years and has worked in education for 21 years. Charles believes in his students’ ability to achieve success and in the invaluable power of teaching to ignite the passion for learning that will follow them as they grow throughout their educational journey. He also serves as an unofficial mentor for new staff members, passing along his own passion for teaching. Both his colleagues and students feel the contagious effect of his enthusiasm and has led to Charles being one of the most requested teachers at his school.

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Charles for his dedication to his students and look forward to hearing of his continued success in the years ahead.

TRIBUTE TO JUDITH PARIS

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I honor Judith Paris, the Wakulla County Teacher of the Year from Shadewell Elementary School in Shadewell, FL.

Judy’s teaching philosophy guides her students to thrive in environments where they are encouraged to explain their thinking and also understand how their classmates think. She works to create a classroom that facilitates a love of learning and where students build self-confidence. In her classes, groups of students often begin the school year at 40-50 percent proficiency in math and consistently improve their math scores to 90 percent or higher by the end of the school year. She credits their success to the instructional practices that she teaches to make students solve problems on their own and by working together.

Judy is a fifth grade math teacher and is also her school’s math team leader and chair of the mathematics committee and co-teaches faculty workshops on accelerated math. Judy earned her bachelor’s degree in technical writing with a minor in mathematics from Louisiana State University and earned a post baccalaureate degree in mathematics. She is certified in elementary education, middle school math, and high school math.