

completing initial training at the Naval Training Center in San Diego, he earned designation as a hospital corpsman third class. In 1991, Cassady graduated from University of Maryland University College and received a commission on June 8, 1993 as an environmental health officer.

From 1993 to 1999, Cassady completed tours at the U.S. Naval Hospital Keflavik in Iceland and Branch Medical Clinic in Iwakuni, Japan, where he increased the overall readiness and health of hospital staff and improved testing of the base drinking water. In 2001, he deployed to Australia in support of Exercise Tandem Thrust 2001 and later deployed to Thailand in support of Exercise Cobra Gold 2002 to improve combat readiness, combined-joint interoperability, and enhance security relationships between the United States, Thailand, and Singaporean forces. He subsequently served as a medical department and safety inspector for the Board of Inspection and Survey, providing direct support to the fleet; and as chief, medical concept and development, Joint Forces Command, where he furthered joint warfighter capabilities and supported U.S. Northern Command response and relief efforts post Hurricane Katrina.

In 2006, he deployed to Iraq in support of combat operations, where he served as the civil affairs public health section lead, Multi-National Division in Baghdad. Upon returning from Iraq, he served as the assistant officer in charge for the Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit Two. Cassady also deployed as the medical planning officer in Expeditionary Strike Group Two and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command in Bahrain, where he was instrumental in coordinating medical plans, guidance, and response to counter piracy and Marine Corps operations, and health service support to the U.S. FIFTH Fleet. His next two tours of duty were as the Environmental Health Officer at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and the U.S. Naval Hospital in Naples, Italy. During these tours he provided public health oversight and leadership. Commander Cassady reported to his current and final tour of duty in July 2014 at the Naval Medical Research Center in Silver Spring, where he provides program management, leadership, and key administrative direction.

Commander Cassady has spent the entirety of his adult life and over 15 of his 35 years of naval service deployed or stationed overseas in the defense of the United States. Additionally, he holds a master of science in management from Troy State University, a master of public health degree from the Ohio State University, a master of arts in national security and strategy from the Naval War College in 2007, and a master of science in education from Old Dominion University, which he completed in December of 2011.

Mr. President, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, and Commander

Mike Cassady's family and friends in saluting this distinguished officer's many contributions and sacrifices in defense of our great Nation. It is fitting that the Senate today publicly recognizes his service and wishes him, his wife Rohini, and their children, Rhyann, Kassandra, Briana, and David, health, happiness, and success in the years to come.

Congratulations, Commander Cassady, on completing an exemplary career.

TRIBUTE TO YVETTE LEWIS

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Yvette Lewis for her excellent service as part of my team in support of the people of Maryland. Yvette has been our director of external relations and community outreach in my Senate office since I began my service in the Senate. In that capacity, she has organized forums throughout Maryland to provide support to our veterans, our senior citizens, and others. Her signature program was organizing consumer protection forums across our State so we could alert Marylanders to the wide array of schemes and scams designed to cheat consumers out of their hard-earned money. She has been deeply committed to the principle that the health of our entire State depends on the success of all our communities.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Yvette for over a decade and am grateful for all her good works in our State and beyond. She is a longtime resident of Bowie, MD, and has worked for years in public service and civic engagement. She has previously worked as the president of the Voter Empowerment Action Project. Moreover, she has also served on the White House Commission for Presidential Scholars. Additionally, she has an accomplished background in music as an opera singer and music teacher in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Montgomery county schools. Yvette is married to Ed Lewis, and they have two children, Shannon and Eric.

Various events have led to a sudden vacancy in the position of the chair of the Maryland Democratic Party. Yvette was the consensus choice as the right person for the job at this moment. While we will miss her on Capitol Hill, I am glad that her enormous talents will also be put to good use in her new role.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING DENISE D'ASCENZO

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to Denise D'Ascenzo, the longtime anchor at WFSB Channel 3 Eyewitness News, the CBS station in Hartford, CT. She was a trusted journalist, a devoted mother and wife, and a dear friend. Sadly, Denise passed away suddenly on De-

cember 7, 2019. She will be remembered for her tireless grace, integrity, and humor.

Denise was born Washington, DC, and grew up in Rockville, MD, where she became editor-in-chief of her high school newspaper. She attended Syracuse University, where she got her first break in television at WIXT-TV doing the nightly weather forecast. Also at Syracuse, she met the love of her life and future husband, Wayne. After Syracuse there were stops at television stations in St. Louis and Cleveland, before moving to Connecticut in 1986 to join WFSB.

In Connecticut, she provided special coverage of political conventions, the U.S. visit of Pope John the II, 9/11, the arrest of the DC sniper, and the tragic shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Denise had a passion for health and medical reporting, taking viewers inside operating rooms, cardiac catheterization labs, and neonatal intensive care units, as well as onboard Life Star, the critical care helicopter service. She was a leading voice in raising awareness for conditions such as breast cancer, heart disease, obesity, and preventive healthcare.

During her 33 year career at WFSB, she was honored with 2 Edward R. Murrow Awards, 7 Associated Press Awards, 11 Emmy's, and a national Gabriel Award. She was recognized for her work with a number of charities, including the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Mary's Place, and the Channel 3 Kids Camp. In 2013, Denise was elected to the Silver Circle by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for her significant contributions to broadcasting. In 2015, she became the first woman to be inducted into the Connecticut Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame.

Connecticut has lost a broadcasting legend. We all also lost a dear friend who came into our homes with dignity and decency to tell them the news of the day. She was deeply dedicated to uncovering and conveying the truth of every story. She was there for almost 30 years to guide us through tragedy and triumph, and we miss her immensely.

My wife, Cynthia, and I extend our deepest sympathies to Denise's family during this difficult time, particularly to her husband, daughter, and coworkers. May their many wonderful memories of Denise provide them solace and comfort in the days ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO DAN FREEDMAN

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Dan Freedman on the occasion of his retirement. Throughout his impressive 32 years as a correspondent in the Hearst Washington Bureau, Dan set an example of tireless, honest reporting. He undertook the monumental task of covering the Connecticut and New York delegations with rigor and expertise. Even as the media environment grows more