

and barely survived his time in a Confederate prisoner of war camp in Mississippi.

Earl Armstead, Peter's grandson, served in France during World War I, where he was put in charge of destroying enemy bridges. He came home suffering from post-traumatic stress and, like so many of our veterans, struggled to talk about what he had seen.

And Robert Armstead, Earl's nephew, also fought in Europe during World War II. He served in the Tank Destroyer Battalion and took part in the Po Valley campaign in Italy. His unit was being readied for the Pacific Campaign when the war ended.

All three of these veterans were willing to sacrifice everything in defense of our Nation. This past August, a grateful nation honored them with side-by-side burials at Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly.

Dr. Robert Armstead II, Robert's son, worked to make this historic interment happen. He believes veterans deserve to be remembered and honored for their service. I couldn't agree more.

My own father, who served during World War II, always told me that veterans should not stand at the back of any line. Our Nation must keep its promises to our heroes who have served, whether it is healthcare, education, a chance at a good job, the military recognitions they earned in service, or a place of honor in our national cemeteries, places that Robert Armstead II calls "sacred holy ground."

On this Veterans Day and every day, I salute all of Michigan's veterans past and present. I salute their families, who sacrifice alongside them and help ensure that their stories are never forgotten.

Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO MEL THOMPSON, GILDA LINTZ, KAY SHARP, AND CHAD TENPENNY

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President; I was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1980 and then the Senate in 1996. I have enjoyed the privilege of becoming the longest serving member of Congress in the history of the Sunflower State and representing Kansans in Washington, DC, for 40 years.

It has been an amazing ride, a great partnership in government and many people have been a tremendous help to Franki and me. We want to say a heartfelt thank you to all the friends we have made along the way.

My first boss in public service was a true gentleman from Concordia named Frank Carlson. Senator Carlson was the first person to hit the political trifecta and serve our State as Senator, Congressman, and Governor. The always modest Senator Carlson routinely said, "There are no self-made men or women in public service; it is your friends, family and staff who make you what you are."

Through the years I have repeated Senator Carlson's words on many occa-

sions, and I truly believe that Members of Congress are only as good as their staff. Well, I have been blessed because, for four decades, I believe that I have had the best staff both in Kansas and on Capitol Hill.

While I could offer a long list of current and former aides who have truly made a difference for Kansas and America, there are three unique, humble, and accomplished individuals who deserve special recognition. Mel Thompson, Gilda Lintz, and Kay Sharp have all served quietly and effectively behind the scenes on my Kansas staff for nearly a quarter century.

First, there is Mel Thompson who serves as my State agriculture representative. Actually, Mel and I first worked together on the Washington staff of First District Congressman Keith Sebelius in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Mel has taught me a lot about agriculture and even more about people. Nobody is better at listening to frustrated farmers and ranchers and few know more about the complex and often burdensome regulations offered by USDA and EPA. This incredible knowledge and Mel's neighborly presence led to well-deserved recognition by the Kansas Farm Bureau who honored Mel with a Distinguished Service to Agriculture award. Mel has been a strong advocate for me and, in fact, a brother.

Next, there is Gilda Lintz who serves as the district director in my Topeka office. Gilda is what we call a casework specialist, serving as the court of last resort when communication has broken down between a Kansan and a government agency. Gilda has invested her heart and soul into assisting veterans to obtain service awards or unrealized benefits. Additionally, Gilda has led my service academy nomination board that meets each October to identify the best and brightest Kansans capable of graduating from our Nation's military academies and defending our Nation. I call her "golden." Thank you, Gilda, for nurturing America's heroes. You are a true "Kansas treasure."

I also want to recognize Kay Sharp who serves as my State casework and outreach director. Kay joined my staff after a stint with Senator Nancy Kassebaum and has been a steady and dependable rock in the Overland Park office since 1997. Like Mel and Gilda, Kay is the foundation of Team Roberts. Kay leads my state casework effort and has helped countless Kansans obtain last minute passports, crucial IRS refund checks, and meaningful social security disability payments. More recently, like she did after 9-11, Kay worked after hours and late into the morning on weekends to ensure Americans were able to re-enter the country during COVID-related travel interruptions. Most of all, Kay is someone who I could count on for frank advice and counsel. She always gives you the unvarnished truth, and for that, I am grateful.

Finally, I want to say a word about my longtime State director and now

chief of staff, Chad Tenpenny. Chad has been out there riding shotgun, covering all 105 counties, with me since my early days in the Senate. We have covered almost every inch of the State, from the Cimarron National Grasslands in Morton County to the eastern border in Wyandotte County. The people of Kansas know and respect Chad and depend on him as a direct link to the Federal Government. His steady dependable leadership in the State has been a gift to me and to all Kansans over the years.

As a proud U.S. Marine, where I learned that I could achieve more than I ever thought I really could, I am constantly urging my staff to "sprint to the finish line" and "take the Hill." Mel, Gilda, and Kay have done a lot of sprinting and climbing through the years. Together, we have made Kansas a better place, and for that, I am proud.

Semper Fi.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

• Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the University of Akron's sesquicentennial and congratulate them on 150 years of extraordinary research, education, and contributions to northeast Ohio.

In 1870, Buchtel College was founded in Akron, OH. It was the predecessor to today's University of Akron. The opening enrollment at Buchtel College was 46 collegiate students with an additional 171 students in the preparatory program. Today, the University of Akron has an enrollment of more than 19,000 students between the main campus in Akron and four regional locations, and the school has more than 175,000 alumni living in 138 countries around the globe.

The University of Akron is home to a beautiful 218-acre campus and top programs in psychology, business administration and accounting, secondary education, the world's largest polymer academic program, and more. UA has a \$2.7 billion economic impact in its primary service area, which includes the Ohio counties of Summit, Cuyahoga, Stark, Medina, Portage, and Wayne.

On October 10, 2020, UA will be celebrating its sesquicentennial anniversary with 150 independent celebrations around the world, concluding with a live message and toast from current University of Akron President, Gary Miller. The evening will honor UA's past 150 years of education and research and recognize the impactful, imaginative, and innovative work faculty, researchers, and staff at UA have done over the years and continue to do today.

UA is a prominent institution of higher education with a long history of playing an active role in serving the community in Akron and beyond. Congratulations to the University of