

spirit. He was the type of dedicated public servant that all Americans can admire. He was a no-nonsense executive who could be tough when the job had to get done; but, he combined this strong work ethic with a quick wit, great sense of humor and special charm. His generous smile will be missed by all who knew him.

Ed Aker was buried today, Tuesday, February 24th, 1997, with military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Lisa, his sons, Mike and Tim, his stepson, Jared, and his grandson, Mitchell. He leaves behind a legacy of which his family can be very proud.●

THE HEROISM OF CHRISTOPHER SIMMONS

● Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to enter into the RECORD an amazing story of heroism and courage. Faced with the threat of severe injury to his 4-year-old brother, Michael, Christopher Simmons, an 8-year-old from Mt. Vernon, Illinois, boldly placed himself between his brother and a 95-pound dog. In doing so, Christopher demonstrated a profound sense of selflessness that is all too rarely reported. His heroism, as described in an article in the Mt. Vernon Register-News, was quite possibly the only thing that saved his younger brother from serious bodily harm.

On April 6, 1997, as the boys' father, Phillip Simmons, spoke with the dog's owner, Christopher noticed the boxer playfully tugging at Michael's jacket. Suddenly, the dog lunged for the 4-year-old's throat. Christopher, without the slightest hesitation, stepped in front of the attacking dog and kicked it in the left eye. The dog, startled momentarily, became more angry and jumped onto Christopher, clawing and biting his chest. Fortunately, Christopher's quick thinking gave his father enough time to come to his aid, removing the dog from the boy's chest and subduing it until the owner arrived.

Christopher received two chest wounds and lost a significant amount of blood. Michael, now 5 years old, needed surgery to repair a wounded jaw and a severely damaged ear. The dog's teeth barely missed nerves that help control the movements of the eyes and the jaw. If the dog had been able to do more harm to Michael, the little boy may not have survived.

This horrible incident had one positive consequence: Christopher will be in Washington next month to represent 2.1 million Cub Scouts as he presents President Clinton with the Scouts' annual Report to the Nation. I am pleased to have this opportunity to join President Clinton in honoring Christopher for his tremendous heroism and outstanding courage. I ask that the Mt. Vernon Register-News article describing Christopher Simmons' act of heroism be printed in the RECORD.

The article follows:

[From the Mount Vernon Register-News, Feb. 2, 1998]

MT. VERNON YOUTH WHO SAVED BROTHER FROM DOG TO MEET WITH CLINTON

MT. VERNON—A young boy who stepped between his 4-year-old brother and a 95-pound attacking dog is being rewarded for his bravery with a meeting with President Clinton.

Christopher Simmons, 8, has been chosen to represent the nation's 2.1 million Cub Scouts in presenting scouting's yearly Report to the Nation in the Oval Office next month.

His bravery also earned him the Scouts' rare Honor Medal, "for unusual heroism in saving or attempting to save life at considerable risk to self." Only 42 such medals were earned last year by the nation's 4.5 million Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Explorers.

Christopher's story began last April 6 when his dad, Phillip, took along Christopher, then 7, and his brother, Michael, to help the dog's owner with some yard work.

Phillip Simmons was chatting with the man, who is in his 80s, when he saw the dog shaking Michael by his coat. The boxer then released its grip and aimed for Michael's throat.

"As his jaws closed on Michael's head, Christopher launched a kick that connected with the dog's left eye," the father recalled last week. "The pain further enraged the dog, who instantly turned on Christopher."

As Christopher stepped back, with the dog's paws on his chest and its jaws ripping at his coat, the momentary diversion gave Simmons time to reach his sons.

"I jumped on him and kicked him," Christopher, a third-grader at St. Mary's School, recalled last week at his home here. "Then he jumped on me. By that time my dad was there. I pulled my brother out of reach of the dog."

Seizing the dog by one ear, Phillip Simmons rammed his fist down the animal's throat and held him against a car.

"As the dog struggled, I looked back to see Michael standing frozen in a pool of blood, still within reach of the dog if he got loose," the father recalled.

"Chris, even though bleeding from two sets of chest wounds, had the presence of mind to pull Michael out of range of the boxer so I could release the dog," Phillip Simmons added. "There is no doubt that if it had not been for Christopher's quick thinking and action, I would have lost my 4-year-old son."

Michael, now 5, had to have surgery on his jaw and dangling left ear. Physicians stitched along a crease so that the ear would heal with no visible damage. The boxer's teeth barely missed a nerve that controls the eye and another that controls the jaw.

A typically lively 5-year-old, Michael seems to have few emotional scars, though his parents say he is very afraid of dogs.

The dog had no history of harming or threatening anyone.

Instead of insisting the dog be killed, the Simmons family agreed to allow the boxer to be sent to a breeding farm where children were not allowed. The dog has since died.●

TRIBUTE TO JACK VAN HOOSER

● Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, at the end of this month, Jack Van Hooser the Commissioner for Rehabilitation Services for the State of Tennessee is retiring after thirty-five years of dedicated service. Throughout his career, Jack has been a tireless servant of the State of Tennessee and has worked to empower individuals with disabilities to

achieve independence and gain employment. Jack's record of achievement is impressive. In 1996, under his direction, the Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation Program served 26,032 individuals with disabilities of which 81 percent were severely disabled. Of the individuals, served 5,820 were successfully employed with more than 90 percent of them working in the competitive labor market. The annualized income of these 5,820 individuals, once they entered the work force increased from \$8.732 million to \$64.233 million. I am proud of Jack's leadership and the achievement of his agency.

Jack began to develop the strong leadership skills that have transcended through his distinguished career while attending Columbia High School in Columbia, Tennessee. At Columbia High, Jack was elected President of the Student Body, and served as the captain of the football, baseball and basketball teams. In football, Jack was All-State for two years and made the All-Southern and All-American teams.

After High School, Jack attended Tennessee Tech where he met his wife of forty-three years, Wanda with whom he has two sons, Jay and Dave. He continued his sports career at Tennessee Tech where he played football and baseball. As Tennessee Tech's quarterback he made the All-Conference Team and the little All-American Football Team. Jack served in the United States Army for two years upon graduation.

Jack went back to school and earned a master's degree from the University of Tennessee after his military service and was a teacher and athletic coach in Lake City, Florida and Isaac Litton High School in Nashville. Even today, serving as a softball coach, his passion for sports and coaching is evident.

In 1960, Jack began his service to the citizens of Tennessee with the Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services. He started as a Disabilities Examiner, helping individuals with disabilities get their benefits. Jack, went on to supervise, train and develop the staff of the Division of Rehabilitation Services. As I review Jack's record of achievement, I notice that he has held several important positions that touched all aspects of the program until he ultimately headed the program in 1995. I am proud of his dedication to help Tennesseans with disabilities achieve employment, to help give them opportunity and independence. That caring and dedication should serve as an example to us all as we carry out the critical work of the United States Senate.

Friday, Jack Van Hooser will retire. He will spend more time with his wife and family. I have no doubt that he will also teach his four granddaughters, not only how to play softball, but teach them how to be leaders and serve their fellow citizens with the dignity and respect he has for so many years.●