

HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate the Hamilton High School Academy of Music for receiving a GRAMMY Signature Schools Gold award. The GRAMMY Signature School Awards are presented by the Naras Foundation, Inc., in consultation with a panel of judges composed of music educators and professionals. The Hamilton High School Academy is one of just 250 schools selected for this award nationwide.

The Hamilton High School Academy is a magnet school of the Los Angeles Unified School District, attracting students from throughout Los Angeles for its specialized music programs. Opening its doors in September 1987, the Hamilton High School Academy has provided a comprehensive music program to an ethnically and culturally diverse student body. The program includes coverage of instrumental, vocal, piano, and electronic music. In addition the school features intensive instruction in both the theory and history of music. The Academy also provides a full spectrum of academic classes, which are designed to meet the needs of all students.

The Hamilton High School Academy has received local, regional, and now national recognition. The GRAMMY Signature School Award is a testament to the academic and musical excellence of the Hamilton High School Academy of Music. •

BISHOP NICHOLAS HONORED BY
COMMUNITY

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge His Grace Nicholas, Sovereign Bishop of the Diocese of Detroit, who was elected to the Episcopate by the Holy and Sacred Synod of Constantinople.

Bishop Nicholas was born in Glen Falls, NY, in 1953 to Emmanuel and Caliope Pissare. He attended Colgate University and was awarded the prestigious Colgate War Memorial Scholarship. He then attended the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, graduating as the Valedictorian of the senior class in 1978 with a Master's Degree in Divinity.

Bishop Nicholas was ordained as Deacon on July 6, 1991. Then he was ordained to the Priesthood by Bishop Maximos where he was elevated to the rank of Archmandrite on the same day, based on his years of service to the church. He served as Diocese Chancellor of Pittsburgh from 1991 until 1995 and then Chancellor of the Diocese of Detroit from 1996 to 1997.

His Grace Bishop Nicholas of Detroit was elected to the Episcopate by the Holy and Sacred Synod of Constantinople and has been ordained in the Holy Cross Church of Brooklyn, New York. As of April 18, 1999 Bishop Nicholas began his Apostolic work in the Diocese.

Bishop Nicholas continued dedication to our community has had an immeas-

urable effect on the young and old alike. He truly is a role model of determination and spiritual leadership. I extend Bishop Nicholas the best of luck for his future. •

TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR NELSON

• Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President I rise today to honor Arthur Nelson, of Goshen, New Hampshire, for his dedicated service to his town and the nation.

Arthur has been an important figure in the town of Goshen. His commitment to the community has not gone unnoticed. It is for this reason that he was chosen Honorary Parade Marshall in celebration of the founding of the Goshen Volunteer Fire Department.

In 1939, Arthur helped establish the Goshen Volunteer Fire Department. This was the beginning of Arthur's long and fulfilling career as a public servant to the town of Goshen. Since then he has served as fire warden for fifty years. During those years he had been known to strap on a backpack pump and search reported puffs of smoke. This intense devotion led him to successfully find, and extinguish, many wildfires.

In addition to service to the town of Goshen, Arthur has been an active participant in fire fighting in Sunapee, Croyden, Marlow and Grantham. His concern for the safety of his own community, and those of his neighbors, has brought Arthur a tremendous amount of respect from all who know him. All of these towns join Goshen in recognizing Arthur as a true hero.

Arthur's presence in the Goshen Volunteer Fire Department is not his only contribution to his community. He has been elected and served as a selectman, been a part of the Historical Society and served on the Conservation Commission. Arthur has also been an active member of the Goshen Community Church. Among all of his commitments, Arthur was also able to write a book in his spare time. Foundations of Old Goshen, published in 1980, in a history of the town he loves.

At age 91, Arthur can look back on a fulfilling life in the town of Goshen. His dedication to community service should be used as an example for others. I want to commend Arthur for his commitment to serving his town and country. It is an honor to represent him in the United States Senate. •

PROTECTING THE EARTH'S SOIL
FERTILITY JUNE 17—WORLD DAY
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

• Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, the gradual but accelerating loss of soil fertility and productive agricultural land worldwide may not be headline-grabbing news. But it is the kind of threat that, if not addressed, will exacerbate global problems of hunger, poverty, migration and conflict over local scarce land and water resources in the 21st century.

The process of soil erosion and severe land degradation, often referred to as "desertification," results from over-cultivation, deforestation, improper irrigation and drought. Most Americans are aware of the phenomenon from our own "dust bowl" in the 1930's when hundreds of thousands of farmers were forced to abandon their exhausted land. Today, dust bowls are occurring in more than 90 countries with an alarming annual loss of 10 million acres of productive agricultural land worldwide. Because of our own successful soil and water conservation programs, U.S. businesses, universities and non-governmental organizations have a crucial role to play in providing technical expertise and support to communities around the world that are fighting land degradation.

Today is World Day to Combat Desertification, which marks the fifth anniversary of a coordinated international initiative to address the land degradation problem. In recognition of this observance, I would like to share a recent Christian Science Monitor op-ed piece on the seriousness of land degradation in Africa written by His Excellency Mamadou Mansour Seck, Senegal's Ambassador to the United States.

I ask that the article be printed in the RECORD.

The article follows:

SHRINKING FORESTS—WILL U.S. AID IN THE GREENING OF WORLD'S "DUST BOWLS"?

(By Mamadou Mansour Seck)

As a young pilot 40 years ago, flying over my country of Senegal and across Africa's Sahel region, I remember looking down on vast stretches of green fields and forests. Today the view is of a yellowish brown landscape that's growing barren.

Like many African countries, Senegal is losing precious agricultural land to a process of soil erosion and degradation known as "desertification." It occurs when land that receives little or irregular rainfall is over-cultivated, overgrazed, deforested, or otherwise stripped of its soil-fixing vegetative cover.

Worldwide, with more than 10 million acres of farm land becoming unproductive each year, "dust bowls" are multiplying and raising legitimate concern about our planet's capacity to feed its rapidly growing population.

In Africa and elsewhere, desertification fuels a downward cycle of poverty and hunger, which leads to migration from rural areas to overcrowded urban centers including those in North America and Europe. Desertification can lead to conflict over scarce resources, threatening to undermine the progress Africa is making toward democracy and economic reform.

But desertification is not inevitable. The U.S. can play a larger role in stemming the tide by ratifying the Convention to Combat Desertification, already ratified by 150 other countries.

The 1994 Convention focuses on food security and poverty reduction. It also promotes African self-reliance, a shift from aid to trade, the sustainable use of natural resources, and the benefits of democratic participation.

The U.S. signed the treaty in 1994, and President Clinton, during his trip last year to Africa, reaffirmed U.S. support for it. But