

employees, and I wish continued success for Mr. Tobias in his future endeavors.●

LYBA COHEN

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate a recent college graduate who resides in Rutland, Vermont. Lyba Cohen has joined the multitude of students who received their bachelor's degrees from colleges and universities across the country in the past months. She graduated from Lehman College in the Bronx, New York with a bachelor's degree in English literature with a minor in Italian. She also walked away with a nearly perfect GPA. Although Lyba Cohen speaks seven languages fluently, she considers the English language her greatest love. She has an insatiable love of learning, and plans to continue her education next fall.

there is one detail that I have failed to mention regarding this recent college graduate. Mr. President, Lyba Cohen is 82 years old. she was born and raised in Estonia, became part of the Zionist movement after high school, and was among the first people to settle the state of Israel. A woman who has worn many hats throughout her life, Mrs. Cohen is a tribute to students and senior citizens alike. She relocated to Rutland two years ago, and I am proud to honor this fascinating Vermonter. Mrs. Cohen has led a rich and fulfilling life, and at 82 she has embarked on yet another journey. this unique student deserves recognition, and I ask that the article from the Rutland daily Herald be printed in the RECORD so that all Senators may read about this remarkable women.

The article follows.

A LIFELONG LEARNER—RUTLAND WOMAN EARNS COLLEGE DEGREE AT AGE 82

(By Cauley Greene)

Lyba Cohen is a great student. She's graduating with a sky-high GPA and a bachelor's degree in English literature with a minor in Italian.

Like other graduates, she looks forward to a summer of rest before deciding whether to delve back into academia.

But unlike most college graduates, Cohen is 82 years old.

She'll be accepting her diploma from Lehman College in the Bronx, N.Y., on Friday with the rest of the class of 1999.

The more than 60 years between her high school diploma and her bachelor's degree have been packed full with feats that make her latest accomplishment seem more like a brief stop along the way than a final destination.

She has been a pioneer, a working mother and, most recently, a student.

Although her life as a traditional student began 10 years ago at a non-traditional age, Cohen has been something of a student all her life, learning as she went along.

Born and raised in Estonia, Cohen ventured off the beaten path early.

"When I graduated from high school I joined a group of friends that I had in a Zionist youth organization," she said. For two

years the group trained for a life in agriculture, to be among the first to settle what is now Israel.

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When war broke out in 1948, Abraham traveled back and forth to Israel while Lyba stayed in New York, helping her father-in-law with the family bakery. After the war ended her husband returned and took over the bakery. Cohen helped run the business until their two sons were out of school.

In 1970, she took the civil service test and took a position with the New York City Human Resources Administration, where she worked for 17 years, living in the Bronx. Widowed in 1973, Cohen lived and worked in the Bronx by herself. She retired in 1987.

Restless and driven by what she described as a love of the English language, she enrolled at Lehman College a year after she retired. An interest in English, sparked when Cohen was in high school, guided her toward a concentration in literature and modern language.

"I just fell in love with the English language," she said of her high school years.

She has been taking college classes since 1988, averaging two courses a semester.

"It took me a very long time because of health problems and hospital stays," she said. Her health and other factors prompted her move from the Bronx to Rutland in December 1997, but she stayed in school.

"I didn't give up," she said.

She now lives across the street from her son, Barry Cohen. Her other son, Boaz, who lives in Warren N.J., will join the family as they watch her accept her diploma.

The move made finishing her degree more difficult, but Lyba Cohen said she's glad she came north.

"I love it here, it's a wonderful place . . . I wish I had come here earlier," she said.

Her love of language is greater. She speaks seven different tongues, and when she speaks it seems every word she uses has been carefully chosen. She cites the same discrimination in her favorite author, Vladimir Nabokov, who also learned English as a second language.

"I like him, I like his linguistic proficiency," she said.

Cohen's love of language has also translated into academic success. She has received grades higher than an "A" in her last two semesters, and was told by her professor that three papers on author Toni Morrison she had recently done were written on a graduate level. Cohen's GPA is also very high, but she said that it doesn't really matter to her.

"It's close to 4.0, I think . . . It's really of no importance to me at all. The fact is I've acquired a lot of knowledge, she said.

Which begs the question: what will she do with her degree? Her answer probably echoes that of graduates 60 years her junior.

"After the summer I'm going to think about taking some courses . . . but I have the summer to think about it," she said.●

IN HONOR OF JOE REDINGTON SR.

● Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in the winter of 1973, when I was a commercial banker in Fairbanks, AK, pioneer Joe Redington, Sr., came into our offices with an interesting proposition. He was seeking a bank loan to start a sled dog race to commemorate the infamous diphtheria serum run that left Nenana in 1925 to deliver 20 pounds to

serum to Nome to stop a deadly outbreak of the disease.

Joe worked as a commercial fisherman and miner and had no collateral to speak of—and no real chance of getting the \$50,000 loan. He couldn't accurately predict the costs of the race of forecast the sponsor interest, and he couldn't even guarantee that any mushers would reach the finish line in Nome.

But Joe Redington had a dream. More importantly, Redington was a man you knew would accomplish anything he set his mind to. His infectious enthusiasm and "can-do" attitude prompted me to take a chance and make a loan to help fund the world's longest sled dog race—the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Joe Redington got the loan and paid it back. I do regret however, having to come to the Senate floor today to note the passing of Joe Redington, Sr., a true giant of Alaska, who died June 24, at age 82 at his home in Knik, Alaska.

Redington's life is really a microcosm of Alaska's modern history. Born February 1, 1917, in rural Oklahoma, his family wandered the country looking for farm work until they settled in Bucks County, Pennsylvania in the late 1920s. In 1948 after a stint in World War II, Redington and wife, Vi, drove two Jeeps to Alaska and never looked back.

During territorial days and the early years of statehood, Joe Redington helped turn dog mushing—then a transportation necessity in central and rural Alaska—into the state's official sport. Redington and his wife, Vi, were dedicated breeders for nearly four decades. Offspring of their dogs have filled many kennels in Alaska and the Lower 48 with racing pups.

In 1967 he and the late Dorothy Page teamed to promote a Centennial Iditarod Sled Dog Race in honor of the 100th Anniversary of Alaska's purchase from Russia. The 56-mile race around the Big Lake—Wasilla area was a great success. The Centennial's success spurred the idea for the Iditarod.

But Redington's Iditarod dream was realized when 34 mushers left Anchorage on March 3, 1973 for the inaugural Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. The 1,100-mile race took the adventurous mushers across some of the roughest terrain in Alaska. Twenty-two mushers crossed the finish line in Nome on April 3 with the top finishers sharing the \$50,000 purse. In 1976, Redington's determination and dedication to the Iditarod race, led Congress to designate the Iditarod Trail as a National Historic Trail. The race has been run every March since 1973.

Joe Redington Sr., at age 57, ran his first Iditarod in 1974 and ran in every race until 1992. At age 80, Redington ran in his 19th and final Iditarod in 1997 where he finished a very respectable 36th. His finish time was 13 days, 4 hours and 18 minutes—nearly 17 days faster than