

can agree on the importance of Lithuania's contribution to freedom and independence for the former Soviet Republics and will join me in congratulating Lithuania on its National Day.

I am honored that my mother was born in the tiny Lithuanian village of Jurbarkas many years ago; that she came to this country proud of her heritage, but determined to be an American citizen. My late brother, Bill, and I visited Lithuania a few years ago and found that we have cousins in Jurbarkas that we had not known we had. For our family, the Iron Curtain literally cut off the Lithuanian branch from their American cousins. This Senator, the son of that proud Lithuanian mother, now serves in this great body and takes pride in being able to rise and salute the Lithuanian people on their independence.

MINNESOTA CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, This month in Minnesota and across the country we celebrate "Black History Month"—a time when our nation rightfully recognizes the many and varied achievements of African Americans and the positive contributions they have made to American society and to our way of life.

In 1926, Carter Woodson—considered by many to be the "Father of Black History"—created Negro History Week, which became Black History Week in the early 1970s. In 1976, February was chosen to be Black History Month, because it included the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, both of whom made heroic contributions to the lives of African Americans in this country.

Today, Americans of all races recognize Black History Month as an important way to celebrate the achievements of African-Americans in Minnesota and the United States.

However, today, and throughout our history as we honor this commemoration, we must also remember that we have a long way to go to ensure full and equal rights, opportunities, and benefits for all Americans.

We must be bolder in our efforts to ensure that all Americans—of every race—have the opportunity to share in—and contribute to—our economic prosperity. That means a quality education, adequate housing and health care for all Americans. And it means that our tax and budget policies must spread their benefits across all social and economic lines.

We must renew our commitments to ensure that all American—of every race—can fully share in—and contribute to—our economic prosperity. That means quality education, housing, and health care for all Americans. It means a good job with living wages, so that everyone can earn the American dream. And it means our tax and budget policies must spread their benefits across all social and economic lines.

We must increase our efforts to ensure that our justice system is color blind when it comes to enacting and enforcing our laws. Racial profiling, hate crimes, prejudice, and discrimination must be eliminated now and forever.

Ever since a Minneapolis Mayor named Hubert Humphrey challenged the consensus of the Democratic Party on civil rights in 1948, the women and men who have lead and shaped my party have made tremendous contributions to achieving these national goals. But this work is yet unfinished, and it is now, during Black History Month, that all members of this new Congress and our new President must rededicate ourselves to these causes.

I voted against confirmation of our new Attorney General, John Ashcroft, because I did not think he was adequately committed to upholding our nation's long and hard-fought tradition—forged by Democrats and Republicans alike—on civil rights. Now that he has been confirmed, however, I hope he will demonstrate through his actions that he truly is interested in justice for all Americans, regardless of race.

I intend to hold him to the promises he made during his confirmation process that he will not repeat his past actions that demonstrated a racial insensitivity which not only divided many communities, but also the work of this Senate.

The Bush Administration's recent announcement that it will appoint an African American as Attorney General Ashcroft's top deputy is a good start to healing some of these rifts, but we must see action.

Minnesota takes great pride in the African Americans who have made our state and our country a better place to live, work, and recreate. Their contributions to the arts, business, politics and culture are numerous.

Starting back in the Civil War, Black Minnesotans were involved in important undertakings that contributed to the good of the nation. In 1860, although there were only 259 residents of African descent in the state, 104 Black men served in the Union army. Despite being paid less and suffering from racial prejudice, they fought courageously along with their white brethren.

Minnesotans also played important roles in more recent civil rights advances. The U.S. Postal Service recently honored St. Paul native Roy Wilkins as the 24th American honored in the Black Heritage Commemorative Stamp Series. As a leader of the NAACP when this country made significant civil rights advances, his legacy is felt today across this country.

Alan Page was first known to most of us as an all-pro Hall of Fame lineman for the Minnesota Vikings. However, Alan has often said he takes more pride in his subsequent career as a Special Assistant Attorney General and an Associate Justice on the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Nellie Stone Johnson has had a long and distinguished record of public service in support of the advancement of minority concerns, the rights of workers, and equal opportunities for all people. Her life is chronicled with a series of "firsts." As a leader of organized labor in the 1930s and 1940s, she was the first woman vice president of the Minnesota Culinary Council and the first woman vice president of Local 665 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union. She was also the first African American elected to citywide office in Minneapolis when she won a seat on the Library Board in 1945.

Sharon Sayles-Belton, another of Minnesota's greatest mayors, has for almost eight years led initiatives to make our state's largest city a better place to live, work, do business and educate our children.

And Billy McGee, a Public Defender who passed away last year, was a tireless champion of civil and human rights in the Twin Cities community. Everyone knew that they could call Billy at all hours and be assured of his help.

Minnesota native Dave Winfield and World Series hero Kirby Puckett were both voted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame last year. Not only are they great athletes, they are greatly respected and enormously contributing civic leaders.

And William Finney is the distinguished Chief of Police of our capitol city, St. Paul. He has successfully integrated that police force, combatted crime afflicting citizens of all races and nationalities, and helped lead the way for racial and social advances in his city.

Those are just a few of the Minnesotans who have and continue to set examples for the rest of us. There are many more women and men who are giving their very best to improve our state. As we celebrate Black History Month, we can all do well to look to their examples of activism and excellence. And we can strive to follow their leadership in making this country all that it should be for all our citizens.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING CHASKA POLICE OFFICERS BRADY JUELL AND MIKE KLEBER

• Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor two Minnesota heroes.

Chaska police officers Brady Juell and Mike Kleber saved the lives of more than a dozen residents as fire burned through an apartment building.

On the morning of Tuesday February 6, 2001 a fire broke out in an apartment building in Chaska, Minnesota. With little regard for their own safety, Officers Juell and Kleber searched and found resident after resident. In some instances they literally pulled people to safety.