

TRIBUTE TO VILLAGE BANK &  
TRUST COMPANY

• Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Village Bank & Trust Company of Gilford. Named this year's Financial Services Business of the Year by the New Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and Business NH Magazine, Village Trust has established a unique niche in New Hampshire.

Disguised as a typical bank, Village Trust couldn't be further from traditional financial institutions. Their unique relationship with the community has made them an extremely deserving candidate for this award. From the Bank's beginning in 1982, Founder and President Gregory Dickinson has focused on giving to the community. As Gregory said, "We are committed to the community and the community is loyal to us." Village Bank's track record with their community includes sponsoring the first affordable housing project for the Laconia Area Community Land Trust, being among the first contributors to the Belknap County Economic Development Council, financing the bond for the Main Street Project in Laconia as well as numerous other housing authority projects. Along with these projects, Village Bank is known for its commitment to economic initiatives and its consistent support for local businesses.

I applaud the dedicated efforts in improving the community which Village Bank continually demonstrates. They are a positive example to the Granite State not only in their business practice, but also their philanthropic efforts. I wish them continued success in the coming years, and thank them for their contributions to New Hampshire. It is an honor to represent you in the United States Senate.●

TRIBUTE TO JACK B. MIDDLETON

• Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Jack B. Middleton, recently named Business Leader of the Year 2002, by the NH Chamber of Commerce and Business NH Magazine. Jack's efforts both in his profession and in his community are unsurpassed, and set an impressive standard for his peers to follow.

Jack currently serves as President of the New Hampshire based law firm McLane, Graf, Raulerson & Middleton. Joining the firm in 1956, he entered a tradition of community service and dedicated practice. He became a partner in 1962 and later became President. His countless accomplishments both in his professional career and philanthropic efforts have led him to a position of mentor, friend and leader.

I applaud Jack's continued service to the legal profession and willingness to accept leadership roles in numerous organizations. His service extends to state and regional bar associations, legal foundations, the Interest on Lawyer's Trust Account, IOLTA, program,

and his own firm. He is the longest serving Chair of the NH Bar Foundation and Secretary of the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association. His position on the American Bar Association is one of great pride to the New Hampshire legal community, as he is only the second person from New Hampshire to hold a position at the national level of the ABA. He is the former President of the New Hampshire Bar Association, the New England Bar Association, the National Conference of Bar Foundations, the National Conference of Bar Presidents and a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Along with these positions of service, Jack has also received numerous awards such as Citizen of the Year 1994 by the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, New Hampshire's Distinguished Citizen of the Year 2000 by the Daniel Webster Council and has twice been awarded the President's Award for Special Service to the Profession by the New Hampshire Bar Association.

Jack's community service sets a positive example for all Granite Staters and his dedication to improving his community is beyond compare. His role in developing the IOLTA program, which offers legal assistance for the needy as well as public education about the law, was critical to helping the people of New Hampshire. This program allows lawyers to place money that they are holding for short periods of time into a pooled interest-bearing account. The proceeds of which fund the program. Since the start of the program in 1982, the account has raised more than \$13 million dollars. Jack's efforts to develop this already existing program in New Hampshire as well as his many contributions in other fundraising efforts and community service have led the Bar Foundation to name Jack an "Honorary Fellow."

Jack Middleton is an extraordinary example of someone who serves his community as he would serve his career. By continuing the long-standing tradition of philanthropy that his firm has set forth, Jack has shown once and again why he is such a deserving candidate of this year's award. I congratulate him and wish him continued success in future years. It is an honor to represent Jack Middleton in the United States Senate.●

TRIBUTE TO MANCHESTER NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES, INC.

• Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services, MNHS, of New Hampshire. MNHS is this year's recipient of the Real Estate/Construction Business of the Year Award by the New Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and Business NH Magazine.

I commend the efforts of MNHS to improve the City of Manchester and provide affordable housing to low-in-

come residents. Founded in 1992, MNHS began as a revitalization project for Manchester's inner city neighborhoods. One of the largest and most visible projects thus far has been the \$11 Million Elm Street Restoration Project, which created 68 affordable apartments in two of the historic downtown brownstones. This project is one of the largest nonprofit affordable housing projects in New Hampshire's history.

I would also like to recognize the Renaissance, a 24 unit family rental project and the first Low Income Housing Tax Credit project, created for first-time home buyers. Among these many accomplishments, MNHS has also loaned or granted more than \$6.5 million dollars for home purchase and rehabilitation. The outstanding performance by this organization is not only making positive changes to the community but more importantly to peoples lives. There is nothing more important to me than to make sure that people are taken care of. It is an honor and privilege to represent the fine people that make these advancements possible.●

TRIBUTE TO UNITIL CORPORATION

• Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Unitil Corporation of Hampton, which has been named the Business Services Business of the Year 2002 by the New Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and Business NH Magazine.

I applaud Unitil's unique and innovative approach to business and their customers. By taking a fresh approach to the utility industry, Unitil has proven that quantity does not necessarily reflect quality. Unitil was established after a union between Concord Electric Company and Exeter & Hampton Electric Company in 1984. The company now employs 333 people as well as servicing 110,000 customers.

Unitil was among the frontrunners of the industry with the creation of their program, USource, which matches buyers on the Internet with pre-qualified energy suppliers. Unitil's approach to business has resulted in the lowest electric rates available in New England as well as excellent performance ratings from the majority of their clients.

Aside from Unitil's low rates and high quality of service, the real treasure of the company lies within its employees and their dedication to community service. By operating with an emphasis on giving and volunteering in their local communities, Unitil has encouraged employees to volunteer their time and make a positive impact. Led by example, Unitil's CEO Bob Schoenberger is President of the Board of the United Way of the Greater Seacoast. Employees are each granted eight hours of paid leave for volunteering. Last year, Unitil's employees volunteered 1,000 hours of community service and raised more than \$8,000 in a matched contribution program. Unitil also donated \$90,000 to 200 local nonprofit organizations in 2001.