

partner with the law firm of O'Melveny & Myers handling civil matters before he was appointed to the State court bench in 2001. He played professional football before going to law school and has served in the Air Force Reserve.

Two other district judges in California have already been unanimously confirmed this year, Judge Selna and Judge Otero. Last Congress, led by a Democratic Senate majority, the Senate confirmed four nominees to the Federal district courts in California. Percy Anderson and John Walter were confirmed to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California on April 25, 2002, just 3 months after their initial nominations. The Senate also confirmed Robert G. Klausner to be a U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California on July 18, 2002, and Jeffrey S. White to be a U.S. District Court Judge for the Northern District of California on November 14, 2002. The Senate has now filled all seven of the vacancies on the Federal trial courts in California that we inherited.

Last year, at the urging of Senator FEINSTEIN and the chief judge of the district, we included in the 21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act, five additional judgeships for the Southern District of California. We also included an additional position for the Central District of California. By mid-July California will have six important vacancies to be filled. I look forward to working with the Senators from California to proceed, if possible, in advance of July on additional nominations so that these much-needed seats can be filled quickly with fair, mainstream nominees. It is unfortunate that the President, who has had notice of these upcoming vacancies for some time, has not worked with the California Senators and their bipartisan commissions to send consensus nominees to the Senate.

I congratulate Judge Carney, his family, and the Senators from California on his confirmation.

• Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I want to express my support for the nomination of Cormac J. Carney to be U.S. District Judge, for the Central District of California. Mr. Carney has the knowledge, experience and personal characteristics needed to succeed on the Federal bench.

Unfortunately, due to inclement weather, I was unable to return to Washington in time for the vote to confirm Mr. Carney, but I would like the RECORD to reflect that, had I been present, I would have cast my vote in favor of his confirmation.●

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President will be immediately notified of this action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will return to legislative session.

The Democratic leader.

TRIBUTE TO PRIVATE FIRST CLASS LORI PIESTEWA

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to take just a couple of minutes of my leader time to make a statement with regard to a very special young woman.

Throughout America—especially in Native American communities—Americans are grieving the loss in combat of Army PFC Lori Piestewa. But we are also feeling pride for Lori Piestewa's remarkable life.

PFC Piestewa was a member of the Army mechanics unit that was ambushed by Iraqi soldiers on March 23.

Her body, and the remains of eight other soldiers, were recovered last week from a hospital in southern Iraq when Special Forces stormed the hospital to rescue another member of the 507th Maintenance Company, PFC Jessica Lynch.

Private Piestewa is the first Native American woman in the U.S. Armed Forces ever to die as a result of combat.

She was 23 years old. She leaves behind two small children—a 4-year-old son and a 3-year-old daughter. . . .

She also leaves behind a broken-hearted but proud family—and countless friends.

There are more than 12,000 Native Americans serving in our military today—including many from my State of South Dakota.

They and Private Piestewa are part of a noble tradition that too few Americans know much about.

It is a tradition that includes heroes like the "Code Talkers" of World War II—the service members from the Lakota, Navajo and other Indian nations who developed the only military code that was never broken by the Japanese.

The Code Talkers were key to U.S. victories throughout the Pacific theater. Their service helped turn the tide of the war—and saved untold numbers of American lives.

Today, Private Piestewa takes her place alongside them as an American who risked everything to protect her land and her people.

Over the weekend, memorials began to appear all over the reservation near Tuba City, AZ, where Private Piestewa grew up and where her family still lives.

At one of the memorials, someone left a group of red, white, and blue balloons. Included in the bunch was one green balloon, the team color for Tuba City High School, where Lori Piestewa had been a softball star and a junior ROTC commander.

On May 24, Private Piestewa will be honored at another memorial. Red rose petals will be placed in her honor in the reflecting pool of the Women in Military Service for American Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

When I heard about the memorials to Private Piestewa, I thought of another cemetery—at Wounded Knee, on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota.

I remember the first time I visited it. As I walked toward the cemetery, I was surprised to see little American flags dotting many of the graves. When I got close enough to read the headstones, I could see that many of the people there were veterans.

Some—like Private Piestewa—had died in the service. Others had died years after they took off the uniform. But they wanted it recorded on their graves: This person loved this Nation.

I have never seen a more profound expression of American patriotism.

The thoughts and prayers of our Nation are with the family and friends of PFC Lori Piestewa.

She was an American hero. We are deeply grateful to her for her service and sacrifice—and to all Native Americans who are serving, and have served, our Nation in uniform.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I compliment the distinguished minority leader for this very sensitive and very important statement about this wonderful person. As someone who belongs to a family which has lost my older brother, and lost a brother-in-law—an older brother in the Second World War, and brother-in-law in Vietnam—and then have another brother-in-law who is suffering tremendously from his war wounds, who fought both in the Inchon Reservoir in Korea and also in Vietnam, I have to say these are the greatest of all Americans. I really appreciate his sensitivity in delivering this message for the Senate here today.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF PRISCILLA RICHMAN OWEN, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now resume executive session for the consideration of Calendar No. 86, Priscilla Richman Owen, of Texas, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. I hoped my friend in his statement tonight would indicate why we are moving to this woman, when we have people here—we have Edward Prado, who is from Texas, Dee Drell from Louisiana, Richard Bennett from Maryland—who, it appears, will go through here very easily.

My friend should understand, as I told him privately, there will be some people wanting to speak about this at some length.

The majority leader has indicated there will be no more votes today so there is no need for anyone to hang around on this tonight—that's true? You are going to speak, but there is