

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA-DULUTH BULLDOGS

• Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and congratulate head coach Scott Sandelin and the University of Minnesota-Duluth Men's ice hockey team for their appearance in the NCAA Frozen Four. The Bulldogs will be making their third NCAA Frozen Four appearance, having appeared in 1984 and 1985.

Since the Bulldogs will be leaving Minnesota early Tuesday morning, I take note of their remarkable accomplishments prior to their departure.

In convincing fashion, the Bulldogs defeated Michigan State 5 to 0 and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities 3 to 1 to earn their first Frozen Four bid since 1985. Against archrival Minnesota-Twin Cities, the Bulldogs stuck to a solid game plan, scored timely goals, and received phenomenal goaltending from Isaac Reichmuth, who also should be recognized for his stellar shut-out of Michigan State.

While absent 19 years from the Frozen Four, the Bulldogs appearance in this year's Frozen Four is no surprise. After finishing the season 28-12-4, and placing second in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association, the Bulldogs earned the 2nd seed in the Midwest Regional of the NCAA tournament. They are led by Coach Scott Sandelin, who was just today announced as a finalist for the Spencer Penrose Award, the award for NCAA Division 1 coach of the year. Coach Sandelin has achieved tremendous praise in just four years at Minnesota-Duluth and is recognized in the hockey community as one of the most promising young coaches in college hockey.

On the ice, the Bulldogs have been led all year by Hobey Baker finalist Junior Lessard, who currently leads the nation in goals and scoring. On the blue line, the Bulldogs are led by first team WCHA all-conference selection Beau Geisler, and as I mentioned before, Isaac Rehmuch, himself a second team all conference selection, has been unbeatable in the pipes.

The Bulldog ice-hockey tradition runs deep. The program has placed over 34 of its student-athletes into the National Hockey League over the past 35 years. Thanks to Bulldog legends such as Curt Giles, Pat Boutette, Brett Hull, Chris Marinucci, Derek Plante, and Shjon Podein, Minnesota-Duluth is one of the premier hockey schools in the nation and a source of deep pride for Duluth and all of Minnesota.

These young men, 15 of whom are native Minnesotans, are continuing this tradition of excellence and deserve the recognition and excitement that is accompanying their trip to the Frozen Four next Thursday in Boston. Charter buses of Minnesotans have already been filled to make the long trek to Beantown. Congratulations to the University of Minnesota-Duluth Bulldogs for what has been a stellar season and their ongoing quest for the national championship.●

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ATHLETES KIM WILLOUGHBY AND MICHAEL KUEBLER

• Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate two University of Hawaii (UH) student athletes, Kim Willoughby and Michael Kuebler, for their outstanding athletic achievements. Kim is an outside hitter for the UH Wahine Rainbow volleyball team and Michael is a guard for the UH Men's basketball team. Both athletes are seniors and have had highly decorated and successful careers while participating in the UH athletic program.

Fans are quick to recognize Kim's presence on the court as she is best known for her powerful and precise play. During her first season with the Wahine Rainbows, Kim earned the title of Western Athletic Conference, WAC, co-freshman averaging 3.14 kills and 3.02 digs per game. As a sophomore, Kim earned WAC player of the year, All-West region team, American Volleyball Coaches Association, AVCA, and Volleyball Magazine All-American first team honors. That season Kim surpassed conference and school records as she led the Nation with 850 kills and 7.20 kills per game. Kim captured the AVCA player of the week title twice and the WAC player of the week four times that same year. In her junior year, Kim earned the WAC player of the year honor for a second time. In her last 2 years on the squad, Kim ranked second in the Nation in kills per game and was again awarded the AVCA All-American first team titles. In 2003, Kim acquired AVCA's National player of the year as well as was named to the College Sports Television All-American team. Kim set the Wahine Rainbow record with 2,598 career kills, the sixth highest in the history of NCAA Division I women's volleyball.

As a transfer student from Clackamas Community College in Oregon, Michael joined the Rainbow Warriors and started the final 28 games of the 2002-2003 season. Michael's impressive play earned him Academic All-WAC newcomer team and All-Junior and Community College transfer team honors. During his senior season, Michael was voted to the All-WAC first team and earlier in the year tied the team's record for consecutive games with at least one three pointer. Michael not only led the team in scoring, but he also led the conference with 91 three pointers. This past March, the Rainbow Warriors concluded their season with a 21-to-12 record and finished one game short of the National Invitation Tournament, NIT, "final four." During that last NIT match against Michigan, Michael scored a team high of 19 points, earned a career high of 8 assists, and increased his UH single season 3-point record to 97. I am also impressed with his priorities of balancing an athletic career while also building a strong academic foundation. Michael's off court accomplishments include holding a 3.67 grade point average as a business marketing major and

being the first Rainbow Warrior to make the College Sports Information Director's Association Academic All-American first team.

The sports fans of Hawaii and I have enjoyed watching Kim Willoughby and Michael Kuebler compete and develop as athletes. I thank them both for their contributions to their respective sports and continuing the tradition of excellence long withstanding at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. As both of them bid the UH campus farewell this season, I wish the both of them the best in their future endeavors.●

HONORING PATROLMAN BRYAN S. VERKLER

• Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with great sadness and tremendous gratitude to honor the life of a brave law enforcement officer from Mishawaka. Patrolman Bryan Verkler was only 27 years old when his life was taken from him in an instant. He died during the predawn hours of December 13, 2003, in Mishawaka, while responding to a "shots fired" call. After entering a home where an assailant was held up, Bryan was hit by the assailant's gunfire. He fought for his life, but the surgeon's efforts were to no avail. Bryan was a respected police officer who protected Hoosiers and served those in need. He fought for the values that we all hold close to our hearts.

Bryan Verkler was the second officer killed that December morning while dutifully serving his city. Today, I join Bryan's family, friends, and the entire Michiana community in mourning his death. While our memories of Bryan shall certainly live on, so, too, will our sorrow.

Before joining the Mishawaka Police Department, Bryan served on the St. Joseph County Police Department as a Special Deputy. He graduated from the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy in 1999. Recognized as a "gentle giant," he had a generous heart without a mean bone in his body. Bryan loved to laugh and joke and was described as a laid-back man who was conscientious and caring. Yet as a police officer, he was bold and not afraid to fulfill the duties required by his job.

Bryan graduated from John Glenn High School where he was a shot-put and discus athlete. After high school he attended Purdue University and Vincennes University, from which he graduated in 1996. While attending Vincennes, Bryan earned recognition as an All-American athlete while competing in track and field.

Bryan leaves behind his wife of 7 months, Juli; his father, Randy, who is a Walkerton Police Officer; his mother Carolyn; and his brother Brett, who is also a Walkerton Police Officer.

While Bryan's life on Earth has been cut short, his bravery and strength of character shall live on as a powerful and consoling force. May Bryan's life also serve as a clear reminder of the