

Linda Kurz provided leadership for this dual division hospital, providing care for in excess of 36,000 veterans annually, within a primary service area of metropolitan St. Louis, including 9 counties in Missouri and 14 counties in West Central Illinois and lead a care team of 1900 full time employee equivalents.

Linda's lifetime achievements include: A leader in the health care management field, mentor for VHA Health Care Management Trainees, Executive Career Field Director Trainees and achieved the status of Diplomat in the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Linda Kurz, was listed as one of the top female directors in Missouri Hospital Association Newsletter, Summer 2003 Edition and in Who's Who Among Top Executives in 1998-1999 and during her tenure as Director St. Louis VA Medical Center was recognized in 1999, with the Vice-Presidential "Hammer and Scissors" award for her efforts in piloting the first Department of Veterans Affairs Canteen Integration.

During her tenure at the St. Louis VA, Linda has worked tirelessly to improve access to care for veterans and opened three health clinics; she supported her employees by providing educational opportunities for mid-level managers through programs such as mini-MBA and she promoted an open policy, communicating with staff at all levels by establishing employee and supervisory forums.

Linda Kurz will retire after 37 years of government service, having devoted countless hours and years to the welfare of the American Veterans.●

#### TRIBUTE TO MELISSA CENTRELLA

● Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and to remember an extraordinarily courageous young lady from New Jersey, Ms. Melissa Anne Centrella. It is with great sadness that I inform you that Melissa passed away 2 years ago. She was 25 years old when she died. In Melissa's short time here on Earth she displayed an uncommon grace and dignity which we all should emulate.

As a child, Melissa was like every young girl—she was cheerful, she loved her parents, and she loved to dance. However, Melissa was diagnosed at an early age with the rare disorder called dystonia. Dystonia is a neurological disorder characterized by powerful and painful involuntary muscle spasms that cause twisting of the body, repetitive muscle movements, and sustained postural deformities. Melissa lived with the constant pain of dystonia for 18 years. As the years passed, Melissa's life became more and more constrained. She was eventually confined to a wheelchair and then bedridden. Melissa passed away from complications of this disorder.

Melissa endured many painful medical procedures to assess and attempt to treat dystonia. She suffered through

a series of spinal taps, intrathecal pump implantations, and the preparations for deep brain stimulation surgery. Melissa, on several occasions, was overdosed with her medication leading to seizures and once to a 3-day coma. Through all the pain, she accepted her suffering with dignity and never once complained.

Melissa believed she was put on Earth for a reason, that God had a plan for her. That reason was to be a part of the mission to find a cure for dystonia, so that no one else would have to experience the torture that she experienced in her short life. Many in her position would have given up, but not Melissa. Melissa was relentless in pushing Claire, her mother, to establish the New Jersey Chapter of the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation, DMRF.

The chapter today holds many events to raise funds for dystonia research and promotes awareness of dystonia. Whenever Claire became depressed or understandably overcome with distress, Melissa would gently prod her along and remind her of their mission together as a family. Melissa was the only child of Claire and August Centrella. I would like to salute Claire Centrella and her family for picking up the mantle and running with it in memory of Melissa.

Melissa's body lost its battle; however, her soul battles on in her mother and the New Jersey Chapter to improve the quality of life for others with dystonia. Melissa Centrella's memory will live on in those of us she touched and in those who share her mission. Melissa will never be forgotten, and her mission will continue through her family's and friends' hard work and determination.●

● Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute and to remember a courageous young lady from New Jersey, Ms. Melissa Anne Centrella. Sadly, Melissa passed away 2 years ago, at the age of 25, from complications due to a disease known as dystonia. Much of Melissa's short life was dedicated to battling dystonia, which affects more than 300,000 people in North America.

Melissa was diagnosed at an early age with dystonia, which is the third most common movement disorder after Parkinson's disease and tremor. This neurological disease is characterized by powerful and painful involuntary muscle spasms that cause twisting of the body, repetitive muscle movements and sustained postural deformities. Although she endured many painful medical procedures to treat her dystonia, Melissa never once complained. Instead, she became a part of the effort to find a cure for dystonia, so no one else would have to experience the pain she suffered in her short life.

Along with her mother Claire, Melissa worked relentlessly to establish the New Jersey Chapter of the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation. The chapter today holds many events to raise funds for dystonia research and promotes awareness of

dystonia. I would like to salute the Centrella family for the work they have done to found and support the New Jersey Chapter of the foundation. Today, because of Melissa Centrella, her family and others who have fought alongside them against dystonia, we are closer than ever to a cure.

Mr. President, it is important that we recognize the fight against dystonia. Although there is not yet a cure for dystonia, we will continue the work of Melissa Centrella and remember her fight against this disease.●

#### THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, on this 3rd day of June, in the year 2004, I am honored to commemorate the 250th birthday of Hampshire County. This historically and culturally rich county showcases the best of West Virginia, and I am very proud to represent the citizens of this great county.

Hampshire County has a vibrant history beginning in the early 1700s, when tradesmen and hunters eager to begin a new life settled in the beautiful wilderness. Settlers, such as John and Job Pearsall, built houses in the area that would become known as Romney which has served as the county seat since 1762—some 200-plus years, which is longer than Washington, DC has served as our capital city.

The history of Hampshire County encompasses many of the great conflicts in our Nation's early history. It was the turmoil of the French and Indian War that prevented official organization of the county in 1757, despite actual creation several years earlier. In 1794, men from Hampshire County serving under GEN Daniel Morgan took part in overcoming the Whiskey Rebellion. These brave men volunteered to quell the rebellion. The county also endured the Civil War, and was frequently occupied by either Confederate or Union Armies. In fact, according to surviving records, Romney changed hands at least 56 times which is more frequently than any other city during the Civil War except for Winchester, VA.

Only a few years later, in 1870, Hampshire County became home to the State School for the Deaf and Blind through the efforts of Professor H.H. Johnson. The Romney Literary Society donated several buildings and land for the school, which was crucial to the decision regarding the school's location in Romney. The school now serves over 275 students on the 40-acre campus, and plays an integral role in the community.

Today, Hampshire County continues to be a great asset to the State of West Virginia and our country. Hampshire County remains a pristine example of West Virginia's natural beauty. Its many rivers and streams flow through the county and provide residents and visitors alike with recreational and