

This year also marks what would have been Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 77th birthday, and it is important that we continue to honor the values of faith, compassion, courage, truth, and justice that guided his dream for America. We have made great progress, especially in the area of racial justice, but we still haven't reached the Promised Land. If he were alive today, what would Dr. King, leader of the civil rights movement and the Poor People's Campaign, say about the fact that one in five American children are living in poverty today? What would he say about the fact that here, in the wealthiest Nation on Earth, 45 million people have no health insurance and millions more are underinsured?

What would Asa Philip Randolph, the labor leader who organized the Pullman car porters and fought against discrimination and segregation in the Armed Forces, say about the growing income inequality in America and the fact that corporate profits have increased 50 percent in the last 5 years—but low wage workers haven't had a raise in 7 years because the Congress of the United States refuses to raise the minimum wage? A parent who works 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year for minimum wage today doesn't even earn enough to lift herself and her child out of poverty. Would Asa Randolph call that progress? Would he call that justice?

What would Fannie Lou Hamer, a civil rights activist who fought for low-income housing, school desegregation, and daycare, have said if she had seen the pictures of people stranded on rooftops in New Orleans and left homeless by Katrina in Biloxi, Pearl River, and so many other communities throughout the gulf coast? I suspect she would ask the same questions we all asked: How could this happen in America? In 2005?

This year, America lost Rosa Parks, the mother of the civil rights movement. Many others of those who marched and worked with her have passed on as well. How do those of us who believe in their dream keep it alive? We keep it alive by continuing the fight begun by them and by remembering and acting on what Dr. King said: America has no second- or third-class citizens. We should all have an equal voice, and an equal chance to succeed.

Yes, we have made progress in some areas. I think Charles Hamilton Houston, civil rights attorney who as a faculty member at Howard University prepared Thurgood Marshall to argue cases against discrimination, would be pleased to see my colleague from Illinois—the son of a Kenyan father and Kansan mother—serving in the U.S. Senate. I think he would have smiled in sad approval as he saw Rosa Parks lay in honor in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol—one of the highest honors we can accord a person and one she so rightly deserved. I think Mr. Houston would be pleased that at least one of

the murderers of James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman has finally been convicted of that horrible deed. Dr. King would also approve of the fact that the U.S. Senate finally, finally last year, condemned lynching.

I think another civil rights leader, John Jones, the first African American to hold elective office in Illinois, would also approve of the fact that 81 percent of African Americans aged 25 and older had at least a high school diploma, an increase from less than 1 in 5 in the 1950s. Today, African Americans own 1.2 million businesses that generate \$69.8 billion or about \$735,586 per firm. Mr. Jones would also be proud to hear that 60 percent of African Americans age 18 and older voted in the 2004 Presidential election, which equaled 14 million voters.

Yes, African Americans have made great achievements, but Dr. King would also remind us that we have further to go. One example is Georgia's new voter-identification law, which was approved over the objections of noncareer lawyers at the Department of Justice who warned that the plan would unfairly disenfranchise minority voters. Therefore, in the spirit of Dr. King's message of equality and racial justice, we need to reauthorize and strengthen the Voting Rights Act—with all of its sections—this year.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, those in the civil rights movement worked to secure basic civil rights and voting rights in statute. The cost for those in the movement was high: church burnings, bombings, shootings, and beatings. I walked in those same footsteps during my recent pilgrimage with U.S. Representative John Lewis to Selma and Montgomery, AL. It is important that we recognize the contributions of these extraordinary people because the legacy they left behind is an expression of important American values—equality, nondiscrimination, fairness, and ensuring the full participation of everyone in our society. Therefore, I celebrate this month with pride and reflection, knowing that although we have come a long way, we still have a great distance to go in order to fulfill our Nation's ideals of equality and equal opportunity.

REPORT ON FOREIGN TRAVEL

MR. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to report on a trip I made to Europe and the Mideast during the holiday recess, December 22 to December 31, 2005. The trip included stops in Brussels, Belgium; Tallinn, Estonia; Amman, Jordan; Baghdad, Iraq; Tel Aviv, Israel and Frankfurt, Germany.

This trip enabled me to learn about the important transformations countries in Eastern and Western Europe are making as we enter the 20th century and away from the Cold War era. Additionally, my travels through the Mideast provided me tremendous insight into the evolving political structure of the region as well as the United States' progress on the war on terror.

Prior to my departure many interesting and significant events occurred which helped shape the focus of my travels including: the eventual extension of the PATRIOT Act, the successful elections in Iraq, the New York Times disclosure of domestic eavesdropping and the tight fiscal budget constraints placed on the Fiscal Year 2006 appropriations process. The broader implications of these events were issues which I frequently encountered in my travels.

The first full day of my trip, December 23, 2005, began in Brussels, Belgium where I met with a number of members of two of the three U.S. Missions in Belgium: the U.S. Mission to the European Union, and officials from the U.S. Embassy in Belgium. The briefing was provided by: Will Imbrie, DCM; Ted Andrews, POL; Mike McKinley, Deputy Head of the U.S. Mission to the E.U.; Lee Litzenberger, Political Minister Counselor—U.S. Mission to the E.U.; and Dale Bendler, Special Adviser to the Ambassador. The discussions focused on a number of issues including the war on terror, war crimes, NATO and perceptions of President Bush by Belgians. Ambassador Korologus's staff briefed me on his efforts to build a strong transatlantic relationship between the United States, the European Union, Belgium and NATO. I found it interesting that Belgium is the 14th largest trade partner of the United States and that the country is making a substantial contribution to the war on terror financially. I support Ambassador Korologus's efforts and look forward to working with him and his staff in the future.

Mike McKinley informed me that Belgians are unhappy with the war in Iraq and that they see a difference with the war waged in Afghanistan. It is perceived that the United Nations support of the war in Afghanistan, as opposed to Iraq, is the reason the country has sent troops to Afghanistan as well as the horrendous acts of terrorism on 9/11. Mr. McKinley also informed me that the European countries, through the EU, will make significant contributions to the rebuilding of Afghanistan—5 billion euros over a 5-year period. Mr. Imbrie stated that the perception of President Bush in Belgium has improved not as a result of his most recent speeches, but because of the clear success of elections in Iraq.

Mr. McKinley also briefed me on the strong relationship the European Union has with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with 19 members of the E.U. also a part of the 25 nations in NATO. Mr. Imbrie discussed the transformation which is being attempted with NATO, forcing its member countries to acknowledge that a threat within the NATO states is less likely than the threat of terrorism which exists from outside. The transformation also asks countries to be postured in such a way that deployment of support is quick and efficient. Mr. McKinley stated his strong belief

that NATO is producing positive results and is essential as a vehicle available to deploy resources throughout the region and the world.

A particular issue discussed relevant to my work on the Judiciary Committee is that of a law recently changed in Belgium which enabled the prosecution of war crimes committed anywhere in the world, at any time. The law has been reformed now to state that the person bringing the charge must be the offended individual and reside in Belgium. He cited two recent examples of the law's successful implementation.

Of particular interest to me were Mr. Bendler's descriptions of the exchange of information between Belgian officials and the U.S. He cited a recent case where a Belgian citizen suspected of being a potential terrorist was tracked and later lost, only to be found again in Iraq. The individual's intention was to be a suicide bomber and to harm U.S. forces. With the help of the information provided by Belgians, U.S. forces were able to prevent any loss of life to U.S. troops. I believe this type of cooperation between nations is an important step forward in the war on terror.

On December 24, 2005, I headed to Tallinn, Estonia, my first trip to the Baltic country. I was met by Jeff Goldstein, the Deputy Chief of the Mission, and was briefed on the country's history and its future. Estonia is a small country of approximately 1.4 million people, with nearly 400,000 individuals living in Tallinn. Tallinn is a beautiful city with much to offer both culturally and economically. Mr. Goldstein addressed a number of significant issues including the country's declining birthrate, its high tech economy, its AIDS epidemic, and the ability of its residents to receive free schooling in European Union countries.

The issue of a declining birthrate in Estonia is one of tremendous importance. With a country of only 1.4 million people, the decline is being felt and the country is forced with the prospect of having to close some of its schools. To address this problem the Estonian government is seeking an aggressive strategy to reverse this decline. Specifically, the government is offering parents 15 months of paid maternity leave—a rate not to exceed three times the national average salary. Additionally, the employer is required to hold the mother's position open for up to three years. This aggressive strategy is expected to result in nearly 300 more births from last year's total.

While in Estonia, I was fortunate to examine the country's rich cultural heritage. On December 25, 2005, I was provided a guided walking tour of Tallinn by a local guide, Stanislav Lomunov. This nearly 2-hour tour included a stop in the Alexander Nevsky Russian Orthodox Church. Following the tour, I met with Rabbi E. Shmuel Kot, the Chief Rabbi of Estonia, and

participated in the Jewish communities lighting of the first Chanukah candle. This ceremony was followed by a tour of the local Jewish Community Center and site of a new temple already under construction. I later spent the evening with the Rabbi and his family, including four beautiful children, for a candle lighting ceremony at his home accompanied with potato latkes made by his wife.

One of the most interesting aspects of Estonia is its economy. Mr. Goldstein explained to me that the economy is very focused on the high-tech sector and is one of the original producers of software allowing consumers to make phone calls over the internet, Kazza and internet gambling. The country has a tremendous tourism industry with nearly 3,000 hotel rooms to be built by 2007. Additionally, the country serves as an exit port for much of Russia's oil. What I found most interesting is the country's implementation of a 22 percent flat tax since 1996.

I departed from Estonia for Jordan on December 26, 2005, arriving nearly 1 hour late due to snow in Estonia. I was met at the airport by U.S. Ambassador David Hale and immediately proceeded to a meeting with King Abdullah at his private residence. Ambassador Hale described Jordan's reaction to the recent bombings of hotels in the country, stating the Nation had never been more unified and that the terrorist attacks caused the country to review its security measures and civil liberties. The increased security was visible with armed guards and roadblocks at hotels throughout the city.

During my meeting with King Abdullah, the focus of our discussions was on the future of Iraq and terrorism. The King expressed to me the need for the Iraqi government to be moderate and not extremist. He believes a moderate government will provide the Iraqi people something to build upon and help provide a stable country.

Regarding Iran's progress towards acquiring nuclear capabilities, the King expressed the view that the international community as a whole needs develop a plan to address the issue.

I brought up the recent Judiciary Hearing I held to examine Saudi Arabia's promotion of radical Islam. The King said that the difference comes down to ideology and the he is trying to stamp out fear. The Saudi government is not addressing the issue of ideology, and an interpretation of the Koran, that promotes the use violence. It was encouraging to learn, though, that the Saudi government is beginning to base its educational model on that of Jordan's. He stated another way to promote reform is to hold the Saudis to task and require transparency in their actions.

Immediately following my meeting with the King, I proceeded to the office of Jordan's Prime Minister Maruf al-BAKHIT, who served in Jordanian Army for 35 years and is former Jor-

danian National Security Advisor. We began our discussion with the topic of Iraq. The Prime Minister believes that it would be disastrous for Iraq if the U.S. were to pull out. He is hopeful that soon the Iraqi forces will be able to defend themselves. The elections went well in his opinion and hopefully this is a positive sign that the process is moving forward.

We discussed Jordan's judicial system. He explained to me that the country's judicial system has moved away from military courts to a civil court system with one mixed civil/military court. The system is not a jury system but a inquisitorial system where the judge may call any consultant he/she desires. Judges go through a 2-year training program before they are selected to preside over a court. Currently, the country is continuing a plan to upgrade the courts and expedite its cases. The Prime Minister believes that good progress has been made in the last 2-3 years of this plan which includes new technology.

The following morning, Tuesday, December 27, I flew into Iraq. After a 2-hour flight on a C-130 and a 10 minute flight on a helicopter, including 35 pounds of body armor and a helmet, I arrived in Baghdad. I immediately proceeded to a meeting with MG Tim Donovan, chief of staff, Multinational Force-Iraq. General Donovan explained that U.S. forces in Iraq had significantly hindered al-Qaida and other insurgents ability to operate in Iraq. Additionally, he described the hope that in 2006 the United States will serve a more supporting role than it currently does. I asked him what the U.S.'s role will be as the Iraqi security force continues to increase. General Donovan explained to me that the U.S. should serve a reduced role as Iraqi security forces increase and that they are currently working on more U.S. reductions.

The general assesses the future of Iraq's democracy as developing and expressed his view that Iraqis need to move beyond cultural divides. He emphasized that the country needs to develop a middle class to make democracy succeed.

I inquired about the status of Iraq's oil industry. He explained that the industry is old and so is its infrastructure. Currently, they are able to export 3 million barrels a day. But in order for them to expand upon their capacity there will need to be an investment in technology and infrastructure.

Following my meeting with General Donovan, I proceeded to have lunch with Brenda Zollinger, a Horsham, PA native. She described to me her work in the Army over the last 8 years. What I took away most from our conversation is her belief that the military is doing a good job taking care of our troops.

After lunch I met with officials involved in the Department of Justice's Regime Crime Liaison's Office, RCLO; Mr. Kevin Dooley, CAPT Stephen

Burris, USN, and Mr. Eric Blinderman. The RCLO was created by a National Security Presidential Directive in 2004, and serves to assist the Iraqi High Tribunal and to provide security and support for the Tribunal. In the briefing I learned that the judicial system is an inquisitorial system based on a five-judge panel which needs a simple majority to adjudicate. Additionally, the court has no burden of proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

I expressed the view that Saddam has committed so many atrocities that the trial should be very simple if the evidence was put forward in an organized and methodical way. This can not be done with Saddam controlling the microphone to make speeches. I think it is a shame that the trial could not have been held sooner.

Mr. Dooley and Captain Burris accompanied me to the courthouse and provided me a tour of both Saddam's cell and the courtroom. I also viewed the security control room where all actions of the courthouse are monitored.

Following the tour, I proceeded to meet with members of Saddam's trial including: the Presiding Judge Rizgar, the Chief Prosecutor Jafaar and the Chief Investigating Judge Ra-id.

I asked Presiding Judge Rizgar how Saddam could be controlled. He gave me the answer that a doctor deals with the patient, not the individual illness. He elaborated by stating that it is the job of every judge to respect all parties in a case. Additionally, he voiced his opinion that Iraq is on the doorstep of a new life and a careful image of its judicial system must be projected. With respect, I stated my concern to the Presiding Judge that Saddam is a vicious, evil man and that is not coming out in the trial. The Judge explained that he is following Iraqi law and judicial procedures. He explained to me that the court would decide Saddam's fate and that more testimony needed to be heard.

The chief prosecutor explained to me his work on the case, stating the prosecution of Saddam will be long and detailed. He believes that documents and evidence provided to the court and the judges should be given to the public for all to see.

I proceeded from the courthouse back to the U.S. Headquarters for a meeting with LTG Martin Dempsey, Commander, Multinational Security Training Corps—Iraq. Much of what we discussed was of a classified matter, however I can share information about the goals of the Multinational Security Training Corps. First, they are working to build and sustain the Ministries of Interior and Defense's institutional capabilities. Additionally, they are working to generate capable forces and develop those forces in a professional manner. Finally, they are working on the transition and transformation of multinational units to Iraqi security forces.

Lieutenant General Dempsey stressed to me the need for Iraqis to

demonstrate strong leadership because it is that leadership that will be the key enabler to develop the security ministries. Currently, there are 223,000 Iraqis in their security services, 75,000 of which serve as police officers in Iraq. The U.S. is currently assisting Iraq in producing 3,500 qualified police officers a month. As of March 14, 2005, 3 out of the 45 Iraqi battalions were leading the efforts to secure their nation. Presently, there are 45 of the 100 Iraqi battalions leading the efforts to secure their nation. This is a tremendous increase in only a 9-month period.

Lieutenant General Dempsey echoed the remarks of Major General Donovan in stating the Iraqis must achieve government unity by setting aside their cultural differences and uniting as a country.

Before leaving Iraq, I met with the following U.S. Embassy Officials; David Litt, Major General Harris, James Yellin, RADM Scott Van Buskirk, Tom Delare, John Smith, Michael Oreste, Don Allegro, Don Brady, Minnie Wright, Captain Stephen Burris, Kevin Dooley, Liz Colton and Eric Blinderman to discuss Iraq's future and how the Embassy was helping to create a more stable society. It was stated that the odds are good for achieving a collective party in the Iraq elections. I was informed that there are many criminal cases waiting for investigation and prosecution in the judicial system. However, the detention facilities are not adequate and the police do not have enough room for the criminals. On the economic front, the U.S. is working to set the stage for the International Monetary Fund agreement and is working to create a system which prevents corruption. The consensus view seems to be that success of an Iraqi nation depends on the strength of the Iraqis themselves.

The flight out of Iraq was identical to the flight in with the significant exception that the C-130 taking me back to Amman was once stationed at Willow Grove Air Base and was named the Spirit of Philadelphia.

I arrived in Tel Aviv, Israel on December 28, 2005. My first meeting was with Peter Vrollman, Gene Cretz, William Weinstein, Peter Hussee, Jim Beaver, and William Clark of the U.S. Embassy. The discussion began with an analysis of the state of play in Israeli politics. It is expected that Sharon, whose health does not seem to be a major concern, will win the March elections and work in some form of coalition government with the Labor party. With respect to Hamas, it is thought there is a possibility that it could win nearly 3 percent or even outright in the Palestinian elections creating complicated policy questions for Israel. Hamas is described as a sophisticated, strategic and organized while Fattah is in some disarray nor do they have the resources necessary to get votes on certain demographics. One of the reasons that Hamas is doing so well in these elections is their municipality

leaders are well respected members of the community and have done good work for those communities. If Hamas does win and Israel is forced to deal with them there are actions that can hinder Hamas economically such as revenue collected by Israel at the customs boarder which is provided to the Palestinian Authority.

It appears that the economy is improving in Israel and this may be a result of the decline in terrorist events.

I met with Ehud Barak later that afternoon; I was honored to see a copy of my book, "Passion for Truth" on his bookshelf. Barak told me that Ariel Sharon has changed the political map of Israel in a positive way for Israelis and his decisions are slowly moving Israel in the right direction. Barak described the political landscape in Israel like musical chairs, you can defeat people but everyone is still around, they do not go away. Barak asked me about the situation in the United States, particularly about NSA's wiretapping. I explained to him that the Judiciary Committee plans to hold hearings on the issue. He also asked me about the visit to Iraq the day before and my outlook for the country. I explained to him that there are a number of highly qualified men and women working there and that I am hopeful 2006 will be a year the Iraqi's take on more responsibility.

Continuing our discussion on Iraq, Barak conveyed to me his opinion that the United States should stay the course in Iraq, and not to would cause devastating consequences not only for Iraq, but also for the Middle East and the World. He did state the view that the President must continue to project a positive image because a compromised image can create problems itself. Additionally, the U.S. must focus on training Iraq security services and reducing the visibility of its own units.

Immediately following my meeting with Barak I proceeded to meet with Shimon Peres. Accompanying Peres was his friend Rishon Lezion Mayor Meir Nitzan, who was there to describe the ever changing dynamic of Israeli politics.

I asked Peres about the new party Kadima and he explained to me that the new party would be the largest party and would control the government. He went on to describe Israel's changing political dynamic by the demise of the right wing, an extremist wing. Additionally, he described the Labor party's belief that the economy is writing policy. But to him, a modern economy needs to be open to social change and not be driven by economic factors.

We went on to discuss the Palestinian Authority and he said if Hamas were to win it would be a wasted victory because Hamas is a religious based group and therefore there is no room to compromise.

Peres also believes President Bush's decision to go to war in Iraq was the

right thing to do and that the President was the victim of an intelligence mistake. This marks the third leader to support President Bush's decision to seek a regime change in Iraq. He added that Saddam accepted the U.N. resolutions following the first Gulf War but chose to ignore them.

Before the meeting ended I asked Peres if he was really smiling the in picture where he is shaking hands with Yasser Arafat. He recalled the moment and stated that without Arafat there would have been no agreement but with Arafat the agreement would never be fulfilled.

After an overnight rest stop in Frankfurt, Germany, we returned to the United States.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. JOHN BACHMAN

• Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate Newberry College and its founder, Dr. John Bachman, on the occasion of the school's 150th anniversary. Since its establishment in 1856, Newberry College has become one of South Carolina's leading institutes of higher education. I am proud to recognize Newberry and honor Dr. Bachman.

Dr. Bachman originally came to South Carolina from New York in 1815. Settling in Charleston, he became pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, where he served faithfully and honorably for 56 years. Dr. Bachman quickly became a pillar of the Charleston community. He baptized hundreds of locals into membership at St. John's during his tenure and is even known to have educated slaves as well as freemen of African descent. He helped found and served twice as president of the South Carolina Lutheran Synod from 1824 to 1833 and again from 1839 to 1840. As Synod president, Dr. Bachman took action that led to establishment in 1831 of a school to train Lutheran ministers, now known as the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Columbia, SC.

A seminal and active member of the "Circle of Naturalists," Dr. Bachman had a keen interest in the natural history of South Carolina's Lowcountry. He is known to have discovered or described many birds and mammals previously unknown to science and frequently published letters and short articles about his natural history observations in local and regional publications including the South Carolina Medical Journal.

In December 1856, Dr. Bachman helped found Newberry College as a Lutheran-based liberal arts institution north of Columbia at Newberry. Dr. Bachman served as first president of the Newberry College Board of Trustees beginning in January 1857. During his tenure, he took many actions to assure the high quality of secular and religious education that has existed for 150 years.

Dr. Bachman was a true academic, devoted to his church and to God, to science and natural history, to his community and country, and to secular and religious education. He died at the age of 84 in February 1874, but Dr. Bachman's legacy is alive and well at Newberry College. On April 20, 2006, the Newberry Alumni Association will begin the school's Sesquicentennial Celebration with a major 4-day symposium entitled "Nature, God, and Social Reform in the Old South: The Life and Work of the Rev. John Bachman."

It is with great respect that I commemorate the life's work of Dr. John Bachman and recognize the rich history he inaugurated at Newberry College.●

TRIBUTE TO ERIC NAMESNIK

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I, along with my colleague Senator STABENOW, would like to take this opportunity to bring our colleagues' attention to a tragic event that took place last month in Pittsfield Township, MI. On January 11, 2006, Eric Namesnik, a two-time Olympic silver medalist and University of Michigan swimming standout, died from injuries sustained during a traffic accident on January 7. Eric was best known in the swimming community for his discipline, toughness, tremendous dedication, and many accomplishments, most notably in the 1992 and 1996 Olympic Games. During his career, Eric broke the American 400-meter Individual medley, IM, record four times. Eric, affectionately known by many as "Snik," was remembered by his family, friends and the community in a celebration of his life at Canham Natatorium at the University of Michigan on January 17.

Eric was born in Butler, PA, on August 7, 1970, and enrolled at the University of Michigan in 1988. As a Wolverine, Snik helped lead the men's swim team to four straight Big Ten Championships and enjoyed the distinction of finishing in the top six nationally during all 4 of his years at Michigan. In 1991 and 1993, Eric earned the No. 1 world ranking in the 400-meter IM. Eric won silver in the 400-meter IM in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona and in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. Eric also won two silver medals at the 1991 world championships and a bronze medal at the 1994 world championships.

To give you a sense of Eric as a person, Chuck Wielgus, executive director of USA Swimming, offered these words. "The loss of Eric Namesnik is shocking for the entire swimming community. Snik represented everything great about the Olympic movement. His work ethic, toughness and dedication were the embodiment of an Olympian, and they made him one of the most admired competitors the sport of swimming has seen." His long-time coach at Michigan, Jon Urbanchek, said of Eric, "What he did for Michigan is immeasurable. It's not just how fast he swam,

but the good person he was, the character. He had his life in perspective and knew that his family was at the center of his life. Eric was an unbelievable human being."

After Eric's competitive swimming career ended, he accepted a position as an assistant swim coach at the University of Michigan. From 1997 to 2004, he helped coach 11 Olympians, and the Wolverines won three Big Ten titles. After coaching at Michigan for 7 years, Eric became the head coach of the Wolverine Aquatics Swim Club in Ann Arbor and an assistant men's swimming coach at Eastern Michigan University.

Eric's love for swimming was evidenced not only by his many accomplishments throughout his long and distinguished career in the pool, but also by his efforts to help shape the lives of many young people learning the sport. At Wolverine Aquatics, Eric served as an inspirational role model for hundreds of up-and-coming swimmers. Today, his swimmers are wearing blue wristbands inscribed "Swim 4 Snik" in his honor and swim caps with the words "Snik" and one of Eric's mantras: "D3," which stands for desire, determination and dedication.

In keeping with the kind of person Eric was, his last act was to give life to others through the gift of organ donation. He is survived by his wife Kirsten, their two young children, Austin and Madison, his mother and father, Kay and John, and his sister Leesa. Mr. President, Eric Namesnik's medals may have been silver but his heart was pure gold. He will be deeply missed.●

HONORING THE MEMORY OF CURT GOWDY

• Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and memory of Curtis Edward Gowdy. Sadly, Curt passed away on February 20, at the age of 86.

Curt was born on July 31, 1919, in Green River, WY. Curt's passion for sports began early in life. He grew up in Laramie, WY, hunting and fishing in some of America's most beautiful country. When Curt began playing basketball in high school, he became Wyoming's leading high school scorer, standing only 5 feet 9 inches tall. After high school graduation, Curt enrolled at the University of Wyoming, where he played as a forward on the Cowboy basketball team, earning three varsity letters. He also lettered three times in tennis before graduating from the University in 1942 with a degree in business statistics.

With college behind him, Curt joined the Army Air Forces to serve his country as a fighter pilot in World War II. However, a ruptured disk from an earlier sports injury disqualified him from service, and he was medically discharged. While recuperating from a spinal operation in Cheyenne, a radio station asked him to announce for the eastern Wyoming high school football