

portfolios; we track stocks; we do government securities, 403s and 401s, IRAs, mutual funds, insurance plans, money market accounts, and on and on.

"I have had kids so interested in this class that they have gone into the securities profession as investment brokers, insurance sales, working for firms such as State Farm and Piper Jaffrey. Do you think that makes me proud? You bet it does. That is what teaching is all about. Seeing a kid make three times what I make and feeling good about it when they come back to share their success story with you and saying, 'Thank you, you made a difference in my life.'"

Molly Forkrud, a 2006 graduate of Renville, describes her academic career, writing: "I can honestly say in all four campuses, I have received a wonderful education. This education did not come from the walls, halls, or classrooms of certain buildings, but rather the consistent ambition of the teachers and staff who instructed me. The buildings themselves have had nothing to do with my education, but it's the people inside who have impacted my life as a student."

Although the district has struggled financially, it has made the financial commitment to fund an all-day kindergarten for all children, something the State of Minnesota has refused to provide.

Much of the credit for the Renville County West School District's success belongs to its Superintendent, Mr. Doug Conboy, and the dedicated principals, teachers, and staff. The students and staff at the Renville County West School District understand that in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success. It must also provide a nurturing environment where students can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and students at the Renville County West School District should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate the Renville County West School District in Renville for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.●

SAINT MICHAEL-ALBERTVILLE HIGH SCHOOL, ALBERTVILLE, MINNESOTA

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, today I honor Saint Michael-Albertville High School, in Albertville, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

Saint Michael-Albertville High School is truly a model of educational success. Its students and staff recently completed a collaborative effort uniting the environmental sciences classes, studio art classes, and members of the community to create a mural, now displayed in the school's courtyard. The students also designed a flower garden

to beautify the building's landscaping. Each of the mural's components depicts one of the four seasons in Minnesota.

The mural, which was completed last November, was funded through a grant from the Minnesota Arts Board. Over 180 high school students contributed, under the direction of Mr. Danny Saathoff, an artist in residence. Students from the environmental sciences department helped develop the ideas for each component of the mural. Then studio art students transformed those ideas into a proposed design. A local business, Timberland Clothing Store, also helped install the finished mural in the courtyard.

Although the Award for Excellence is in recognition of the school's creation of a mural, its academic performance over the past few years also merits recognition. In 2005, the high school received five stars in reading and four stars in math from the Minnesota Department of Education, which is a significant improvement over the three-star rating the district received in reading and math in 2004. The school also offers a College in a Classroom Program, allowing high school students to take college-level courses and earn college credits through a partnership with St. Cloud State University.

Much of the credit for the Saint Michael-Albertville High School's success belongs to its Principal, Mark Minkler, and the dedicated teachers. The students and staff at Saint Michael-Albertville High School understand that, in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where students can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and students at Saint Michael-Albertville High School should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate Saint Michael-Albertville High School in Albertville for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.●

TRIBUTE TO HELEN ARMSTRONG

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to a gifted musician, successful entrepreneur, devoted wife and mother, constituent, and friend, Helen Armstrong, who passed away on April 28 of this year. Helen was an international virtuoso violinist who dedicated her life to enriching the lives of others through music.

Helen Armstrong was born on March 16, 1943, in Rockford, IL. Her career as a violinist began at the age of 3. Before long, she was enrolled at the Juilliard School where she quickly caught the eye of renowned instructors Ivan Galamian and Dorothy DeLay. She was among the select few chosen to study under them in pursuit of a solo career. Other violinists in this group include

Helen's childhood friend Yitzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zuckerman. In 1976 Helen made her Lincoln Center debut and went on to perform with various orchestras including the Boston Pops, the Indianapolis Symphony, and the New Polish Philharmonic. She has also toured North America, Europe, and Asia as a recitalist.

But Helen Armstrong was not content to be a successful and highly accomplished musician. She was also an entrepreneur and philanthropist who brought music into the lives of others through performance and education. She founded Armstrong Chamber Concerts, Inc. and served as its artistic director for more than 22 years. What began one summer as a way to lure musicians out of New York City to perform in Helen's home in Washington, CT became a thriving enterprise encompassing performance series in Litchfield and Fairfield counties as well as Carnegie Hall recitals, corporate events, and educational programs in schools in Connecticut and New York City. At the heart of ACC is Helen's artistic vision to broaden public interest in chamber music through performance and education, and its primary focus has been to bring musical education to public and private schools through its unique Students' Music Enrichment Program. Over 100,000 students have benefited from this program thanks to Helen Armstrong's remarkable vision and dedication to this cause. One of the most noteworthy examples of Helen's benevolent spirit were her performances at a prison in Danbury. She counted those performances as some of her most rewarding outreach experiences, and said the music made the inmates feel that life was worth living. Helen dedicated her life to spreading her love of classical music, and she has touched the lives and hearts of countless citizens, including my own. I had the privilege of seeing Helen perform, and was truly captivated by her immense talent and passion. Her performance moved me to act as an honorary chairperson of the concert series she organized, and I am honored to have been associated with her organization.

Helen Armstrong was a remarkable woman in several respects. Along with her accomplishments as a solo violinist and founder of a successful nonprofit chamber music organization, she was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She was widowed by her first husband, Alan Cohen, in 1978. Despite this terrible loss, Helen continued to promote ACC's mission and to perform while raising her two children. After a long relationship, she married Ajit Hutheesing in 1996. In addition to him, she is survived by her children Debbie and David, her grandchildren Brenden, Tyler, and Cailey, her sister Nancy, and her brother Robert. I offer my deepest condolences to all of them. They have lost a beloved member of their family. Helen's great talent and generous spirit will be sorely missed by them and countless others.●

TRIBUTE TO NICK WALTERS

• Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to take a moment and wish best of luck to an accomplished, young and promising Mississippian who is leaving federal service to pursue private sector opportunities.

Nick Walters, originally of Wiggins, MS, was appointed as Mississippi's USDA Rural Development Director by President George Bush in 2001. Since then, Nick has done a great job supporting Mississippi's communities, helping to secure resources needed for public facilities, utilities, and for economic development.

This is a key Federal position for my State. As Nick likes to say, this is the "nonfarm," or "nonfood" part of USDA. It is about new water and waste water systems, so people can have clean, dependable running water. It is about new community centers, town halls, and even high-tech or educational assets like broadband service, telemedicine and long-distance learning.

Since taking office, Nick has presented scores of oversized checks, in countless, photos for local papers telling stories about a new water tower or a new police car or fire truck.

Some people might think these things are small, and they often are in terms of Federal dollars. But these modest services will reverberate for years to come. As Nick says: USDA Rural Development is really about economic development, helping to encourage and sustain job creation—paving the way for communities to grow.

Nick has helped administer more than \$100 million to Mississippi's cities and towns through this agency.

He hasn't sat on his laurels waiting for mayors, supervisors, town alderman or CEOs to approach him. Nick has been proactive, innovative, and he has actively sought cases and ways to meet individual community needs through USDA's various Rural Development Programs.

We've all heard the old saying: Don't tell me what you can't do, tell me what you can do. That has been Nick Walters' approach to public service. His first inclination is to act.

That is something we Mississippians appreciate. After Hurricane Katrina, we saw many Federal bureaucrats in FEMA and elsewhere strapped by indecision, blinded by tunnel vision, stuck on what they could not do, obsessed with the word "no," when they should have been saying "yes."

Nick isn't that type. He has provided a great example of what someone in this office can do using its authority to the utmost, and we are working hard to find a successor who will continue this strong leadership.

Nick Walters will be missed, but my guess is that he will be back in public service one day. In what capacity? I don't know. That's a decision for him, his wife Lisa and his young children, Porter and John Garrett.

But now with this success behind him and given his previous experience in

the private sector, his work with former Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice, his stint as chief of staff for the Mississippi Public Service Commission—Nick Walters will be successful in wherever his endeavors may lead.

I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking Nick Walters for his exemplary service to the Federal Government and, more importantly, to America as Mississippi's USDA rural development director.●

TRIBUTE TO BRAD EXTON

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Brad Exton, an individual with a long and outstanding record as member of the U.S. Forest Service. Over the course of his 29 years in the Forest Service, Mr. Exton has held many demanding posts, including deputy forest supervisor and acting forest supervisor of the Black Hills National Forest, BHNF, in South Dakota. He has also been instrumental in helping the Forest Service improve relations with Native American tribes, and helped to create a closer relationship between the Forest Service, National Park Service, and the State park system.

Before his tenure in South Dakota, Mr. Exton served in several States and numerous positions within the Forest Service. He was a graduate forester in Oregon; a river ranger in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness in Idaho; a district ranger in Caribou-Targhee National Forest, encompassing 3 million acres in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah; and a recreation staff officer in the Ashley National Forest in Utah. He brought this wealth of experience with him to BHNF in April of 2003.

As deputy forest supervisor and acting forest supervisor at BHNF, Mr. Exton took a leadership role in confronting some of the most difficult challenges facing the organization. For example, Mr. Exton was a BHNF spokesman and negotiator on issues of concern to Indian tribes. The Black Hills area is sacred land to 22 tribes, including the Lakota people, and there has often been tension with the Forest Service over the role of the tribes in land management and usage. Through meetings and the formation of an advisory group, Mr. Exton has partnered with tribal members to seek a more active role for the tribes in maintaining healthy forests and creating an atmosphere of respect for indigenous cultures and knowledge. His commitment was reflected in 2005, when he was awarded a Regional Forester Honor Award for his work with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in developing a program of fuel reduction.

While it is unfortunate for BHNF to lose a valuable public servant such as Mr. Exton, I am confident he will thrive in his new position as manager of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah. I wish to congratulate Mr. Exton on this excit-

ing new opportunity, and wish him all the best. The cooperation and respect Mr. Exton has fostered in South Dakota will remain as a worthy legacy.●

HONORING RUDY GARCIA

• Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to honor the memory of Rudolph "Rudy" Garcia, a quintessential entrepreneur and fixture in the St. Paul community, who passed away on August 27, 2006, at the age of 61. As Rudy's close friends have noted: "He truly personified the American Dream." Having grown up in an orphanage without any formation education, Rudy decided at an early age to chase his dream of owning and operating his own restaurant a dream that went hand in hand with his great love of cooking.

At the age of 21, he opened his first establishment, Garcia's Casita on the West Side of the city, becoming St. Paul's first Latino businessowner. Through a combination of Rudy's personality and commonsense business practices, he was able to grow Garcia's Casita into a string of six different St. Paul eating establishments during the 1990s. From steakhouses to nightclubs, Rudy's perseverance continually led him to success even in the face of several failures and a St. Paul that was still on the edge of revitalization.

Rick Aguilar, a St. Paul businessman and longtime friend, described Rudy as "a man with a million ideas" whose energy helped him roll with the punches and make his dreams a reality. Rudy continued to stay the course as both he and St. Paul grew alongside each other through the years. In 1994, while serving as the mayor of St. Paul, I had the distinct privilege of proclaiming a day in his honor. While the St. Paul community mourns Rudy's passing, we can't help but celebrate his life that should serve as a model for not only Latinos, but all Americans who are looking to make their dreams a reality.

The St. Paul area and I will sincerely miss Garcia's great commitment to our community. Whether it was his work in the restaurant business or his participation in the early 1960s band the Jaymars a popular area band that played a mix of jazz, rock 'n' roll and blues—Garcia's impact on St. Paul is immeasurable.●

TRIBUTE TO LYN MCCLELLAND

• Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Lyn McClelland, a highly respected leader in the maritime community, who is retiring this month after 21 years of service as the Maritime Administration's Seattle representative. Lyn has helped support the success, safety, and security of the U.S. maritime community in the Pacific Northwest.

Over the years, we have turned to Lyn time and again for her expertise, her judgment, and her ability to come