

## TRIBUTE TO ERSKINE RUSSELL

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, in 1 last minute on this day, I want to pause to pay tribute to a great Georgian and a great American, an individual we all lost last Friday morning in Statesboro, GA.

On Friday morning of last week, 80-year-old Erskine Russell, former assistant head coach at the University of Georgia and later head coach at Georgia Southern University, died of a stroke leaving the 7-11 near his home on the way to his beloved Snooky's Restaurant in Statesboro, GA. Erskine Russell was a football coach, but he was far more than a football coach. He changed the lives of countless young men in Georgia and changed the attitude of the people of our State about higher education.

Erskine Russell was a man who led the University of Georgia and its defense in 1980 to the national championship. Then, a few years later, he got the opportunity at a fledgling Georgia college—Georgia Southern—to establish a football team. He went there and went to the local sporting goods store and bought a football. He took a drainage ditch that ran by the field and named it the "wonderful, beautiful Eagle Creek," and slowly but surely he recruited young men to come to Georgia Southern to play football.

Within a few years, Georgia Southern went from just having a program to being a national champion. And he repeated that national championship again. But more importantly, all through his life, Erskine Russell did what only he could do: he led by example, not by lecture, what was right about America, what was right about living by the rules, what was right about playing by the rules, and what was right about moral character.

Two thousand people appeared at Paulson Stadium last Sunday to pay their last respects to Erskine Russell—a man who will be missed not just for a short period of time but for the lifetime of all those whose lives he touched.

In conclusion, talking about the lives he touched, when my son Kevin was in the 11th grade at Walton High School in Marietta, GA, he was tragically injured in an automobile accident. He was a junior football player there. Erk Russell took the time to write him a personal note when it was questionable as to whether he might ever play football again or even walk normally again. It was Erk Russell's inspiration and his caring, his challenging someone to overcome adversity, that led to Kevin's complete recovery and a year later his competition on the football field once again.

That is just one vignette. It is just one cameo in a lifetime of service to young people.

I pay tribute tonight to Erk Russell, to his family, and to all those who knew him, all those who loved him, and to all of us who will always treasure the fact that he was our friend.

## TRIBUTE TO MR. MORTON J. HOLBROOK, JR.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished Kentuckian, Mr. Morton J. Holbrook, Jr., for his dedicated service to the Commonwealth and his commitment to the practice of law and higher education.

Last month, Mr. Holbrook, a resident of Owensboro, passed away. He was a pre-eminent attorney in Kentucky and will be remembered for the permanent impression he left on Kentucky's legal system. He helped modernize the courts' rules of procedure and was instrumental in pushing for sweeping changes to the State's judicial system.

On August 30, 2006, the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer published an editorial highlighting Mr. Holbrook's legal brilliance, his contributions to the judicial system, and his duty to public service. I ask unanimous consent that the full editorial be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that the entire Senate join me in paying respect to this beloved Kentuckian.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer, Aug. 30, 2006]

## STATE BETTER PLACE BECAUSE OF HOLBROOK

Because Morton Holbrook Jr.'s accomplishments were so many, his love for his community so strong, his quest for knowledge so persistent and his zest for life so complete, penning a tribute to his life invites inadequacy.

Holbrook, who died Friday at the age of 91, was a Daviess County icon who mixed a legal career as a Harvard-trained lawyer with a lifetime of public service, gaining fame in both arenas. Twice his leadership helped completely change the face of Kentucky's legal system. Closer to home, there might not be an Owensboro Community & Technical College without his point work in the 1980s.

Whenever and wherever Holbrook decided to take a stand, he usually became an irresistible force for progress and change. Slight of build and not tall, Holbrook was nevertheless formidable, thanks to his agile mind, gifted and eloquent speaking ability and compelling personality.

For 56 years Holbrook practiced law and would have been admired for his legal abilities alone. One colleague called him the greatest attorney he ever knew. But Holbrook strayed far beyond private practice, to Kentucky's lasting benefit. In 1948 he was appointed to a state judicial committee that totally revised the state courts' rules of procedure. Two and a half decades later he helped push through an in-toto reform of Kentucky's judicial system, which required changing the state Constitution.

Holbrook's other passion was higher education. He was a member of the Kentucky Council on Higher Education for 10 years. OCTC can trace its origins to his involvement in the early 1980s.

Holbrook received many awards and recognitions through the years. Perhaps the most fitting came on his 90th birthday in September 2004 when Daviess Fiscal Court named the county's judicial center in his honor—the Morton J. Holbrook Jr. Judicial Center.

Morton Holbrook—a delight and truly one of a kind—will be deeply missed.

## REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise today to remember the horrifying terrorist attacks that took away so many innocent lives 5 years ago.

As a rule, tragedies of the magnitude we saw on 9/11 do not have silver linings. On that day, we were left only with an aching sense of loss, a sadness that seemed endless, and a bitter rage toward those who had brought chaos to our doorstep.

And yet it is undeniable that amidst one of the worst moments in our history, an ordinary goodness emerged in America. You could see it in the rescue workers and firefighters who rushed toward the rubble, in the scores of young people who signed up to serve their country, and in the quiet candlelight vigils held by millions of people for those they had never met and never would.

In our politics, too, there was a brief moment where it seemed as though the crass partisanship of the nineties would give way to a unity of purpose among Republicans and Democrats that would refocus our efforts on attacking the terrorists, not each other. We saw this in the immediate support given to President Bush, in the near unanimous vote to go after the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan, and in the formation of an independent, bipartisan commission that would tell us how and where to strengthen our homeland security.

Five years after 9/11, the days of that unity are long gone. In the last two elections, the Republican Party has used national security as a political weapon to attack and beat opponents, while the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission float further and further from the front pages. Now, as we approach another election season, the party in power has announced again that it intends to "run on" the issue of national security, with some going so far as to say that the terrorists are just waiting for Democrats to take over so that they can attack.

I realize that in this day and age, it is naive to think that politics would stop at the water's edge. But I refuse to believe that we cannot find the will or the resources to implement a series of recommendations that an independent panel of Democrats and Republicans agree would keep our country safer from terrorist attack.

In a report card delivered last year by the 9/11 Commission, the country's security efforts received mediocre to failing grades—17 Ds and Fs in 41 areas of homeland security.

To this day, our first responders still do not have the communications equipment they need to coordinate a rescue in the event of an attack. We still inspect only 5 percent of the 9,000,000 containers that enter this country every year. We are still spending only 2 percent of what we need to secure our railroads and subways, and not nearly enough on baggage and cargo screening at our airports. We still have only

10,000 border patrol agents to guard 8,000 miles of land borders, and only 1 agent to guard every 3 miles of border with Canada. And we are leaving some of America's most vulnerable targets—including chemical plants with toxic substances that could kill millions—with the most minimal security.

If on the day after 9/11 you had told anyone in America that these gaps in our security would still exist 5 years later, they might have thought you were crazy. And yet since then attempt after attempt to correct these problems—from efforts to fully fund rail, transit, and port security to the legislation I have introduced to protect chemical plants—have been rebuffed by the administration and the Republican-controlled Congress.

This cannot go on. National security cannot be something we only discuss on 9/11 or when terrorists try to blow up planes over the Atlantic or when it suits our political interests on election day. It is an every day challenge, and it will take Americans of every political persuasion to meet it.

Like most Americans, the effect of September 11 felt profoundly personal to me. It wasn't just the magnitude of the destruction that affected me or the memories of the 5 years I had spent in New York, but the intimacy of imagining those ordinary acts which 9/11's victims must have performed in the hours before they were killed, the daily routines that constitute life in our modern world—boarding a plane, grabbing coffee and the morning paper at a newsstand, making small talk on the elevator.

For so long, these acts represented the concrete expression of our belief that if we just exercised, wore seatbelts, and avoided needless risks, our safety was assured, our families protected. Certainly, the prospect of mass violence on American soil seemed remote.

Five years later, we know that world is gone—that we must better understand our fragility and better secure ourselves from those who have the will and the way to do us harm. This means a change in priorities, yes, but it also means a change in our politics—a willingness to put aside the petty, if just for a moment, so that we may rise together to meet one of the greatest challenges of our time. History has shown this will not be easy, but if the ordinary goodness that emerged from that rubble 5 years ago is any indication, I still believe it is imminently possible.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT LONNIE CALVIN ALLEN, JR.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I rise today to honor SGT Lonnie Calvin Allen, Jr. of Bellevue, NE.

Sergeant Allen, 26, graduated from Bellevue East High School, where he was a four-sport athlete, participating in football, track, basketball, and wrestling. After attending Northeastern

Junior College in Colorado, Sergeant Allen joined the Army, where he met his wife Birgit while stationed in Germany. "I was just glad every minute I spent with him because it was the most wonderful time I've had," said Mrs. Allen.

Sergeant Allen was dedicated to the Army, choosing to reenlist after his first tour of duty. According to his family, he was expected to wrap up his Iraq tour in July and wanted to enter law enforcement as a career.

While serving with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division in Baghdad, Iraq, Sergeant Allen was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his military vehicle on May 18, 2006.

Sergeant Allen is survived by his wife, Birgit, who lives in Bellevue, NE; his parents, Lonnie and Sallie Allen, also of Bellevue; and his brother, Nuru Allen, of St. Louis, MO.

My prayers go out to the family and friends of Sergeant Allen as they face this difficult tragedy. Nebraskans should be proud of the commitment Sergeant Allen showed toward the Army and his country. He is an example for us all.

FIRST LIEUTENANT GARRISON AVERY

Mr. President, today I honor 1LT Garrison Avery of Lincoln, NE.

First Lieutenant Avery, 23, graduated from Lincoln High School before earning his degree from the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY. Following his graduation from West Point, he underwent Army Ranger and sapper training, receiving various honors. But according to his father, "He wasn't interested in the decorations. He was interested in the job." Following his service, Lieutenant Avery dreamed of helping war orphans.

While serving with the 101st Airborne Division stationed south of Baghdad, Lieutenant Avery and two fellow soldiers were killed when a roadside bomb exploded on February 1, 2006.

Lieutenant Avery is survived by his wife, Kayla, who lives in Clarksville, TN. He is also survived by his parents, Gary and Susan; siblings, Clinton, Johnathan, and Elizabeth; and numerous other family members, friends, and fellow soldiers.

I offer my sincere condolences and prayers to the family and friends of Lieutenant Avery. His noble service to the United States of America is to be respected and remembered by all. Every American and all Nebraskans should be proud of the service of brave military personnel such as 1LT Garrison Avery.

LANCE CORPORAL KYLE CODNER

Mr. President, today I honor LCpl Kyle Codner, 19, of Shelton, NE.

Lance Corporal Codner joined the military after his graduation from Shelton High School on June 16, 2003, and was deployed to Iraq in mid-February. His deployment was to last 7 months, and the family hoped to see him home safe around mid-September. At the time of his death, Lance Cor-

poral Codner was one among a group of marines traveling in an armored personnel carrier conducting security and stability operations in Anbar province, Iraq.

Lance Corporal Codner was liked by all who knew him; he was involved in his church and in his community, and he was a selfless part of the military who knew the worth of life. Codner's family remembers him saying, "Freedom isn't free."

The loss of this outstanding marine is felt by all Nebraskans, but his example will remain as an inspiration for his survivors, a devoted friend, fiancée, son, and grandson, and we extend our thoughts and prayers to them in condolence.

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD SERGEANT GERMAINE L. DEBRO

Mr. President, today I honor Nebraska Army National Guard SGT Germaine L. Debro of Omaha, NE.

Sergeant Debro was a loyal son, brother, friend, and soldier. Selflessly placing his friends and their families before his own life, he volunteered for his last assignment to Iraq so others could stay home with their loved ones. "He put his friends and loyalty first. He couldn't have lived with himself if one of his friends with kids went over there and died. My brother is a better man than me," said Sergeant Debro's brother, Alvin Debro, Jr.

Sergeant Debro was born into the military, as his father, Alvin Debro Sr., served in the Air Force. He first attended Omaha Benson High School; then in 1991, he graduated from high school in Arkansas, where he played football. His military career began on October 14, 1994, when he enlisted in the U.S. Army as an M-1 Abrams tank crewman. Sergeant Debro joined the Nebraska Army National Guard on October 12, 1997, as a tank crewman with Detachment 1, Troop B, 1-167th Cavalry Squadron based in Wahoo, NE. He was reassigned to the Fremont-based Troop B, 1-167th Cavalry Squadron in January 2001.

While serving with the National Guard, Sergeant Debro was mobilized overseas various times, including service in Kuwait in 2001 and in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 2002-2003. He was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2005, serving as a scout with Troop B, 1-167th Cavalry Motor Reconnaissance Troop. On Monday, September 4, 2006, Sergeant Debro passed away when an improvised explosive device struck the humvee he was driving while on patrol near Balad, Iraq. Then-SPC Germaine L. Debro was posthumously promoted to Sergeant.

Sacrificing his own life so that others could live, Sergeant Debro was the embodiment of bravery and the finest example of generosity. In addition to his brother Alvin, he is survived by his parents Alvin, Sr. and Priscilla Debro of Omaha; and his brother Maurice Debro. I extend my deepest condolences to Sergeant Debro's family and friends, who played such a tremendous role in