

Every day, millions of Americans pray for the safety of our troops, for the protection of innocent life, and for the peace we all hope for. Americans continue to pray for the recovery of the wounded, and to pray for the Almighty's comfort on those who have lost a loved one. We give thanks daily for the brave and decent men and women who wear our nation's uniform, and we thank their families as well.

In this country we recognize prayer is a gift from God to every human being. It is a gift that allows us to come before our Maker with heartfelt requests and our deepest hopes. Prayer reminds us of our place in God's creation. It reminds us that when we bow our heads or fall to our knees, we are all equal and precious in the eyes of the Almighty.

In prayer, we are reminded that we are never alone in our personal trials or individual suffering. In prayer, we offer our thanksgiving and praise, recognizing our lives, our talents and all that we own ultimately flow from the Creator. And in these moments of our deepest gratitude, the Almighty reminds us that for those to whom much has been given, much is required.

In prayer, we open ourselves to God's priority, especially His charge to feed the hungry, to reach out to the poor, to bring aid to the widow or the orphan. By surrendering our will to God's will, we learn to serve His eternal purposes. Through prayer, our faith is strengthened, our hearts are humbled and our lives are transformed. Prayer encourages us to go out into the world and serve.

In our country we recognize our fellow citizens are free to profess any faith they choose, or no faith at all. You are equally American if you are a Jew or a Christian or Muslim. You are equally American if you choose not to have faith. It is important America never forget the great freedom to worship as you so choose. (Applause.)

What I have found in our country, that whatever our faith, millions of Americans answer the universal call to love your neighbor just like you would like to be loved yourself. Over the past five years we have been inspired by the ways that millions of Americans have answered that call. In the face of terrorist attacks and devastating natural disasters here and around the world, the American people have shown their faith in action again and again. After Katrina, volunteers from churches and mosques and synagogues and other faith-based and community groups opened up their hearts and their homes to the displaced. We saw an outpouring of compassion after the earthquake in Pakistan and the tsunami that devastated entire communities. We live up to God's calling when we provide help for HIV/AIDS victims on the continent of Africa and around the world. In millions of acts of kindness, we have seen the good heart of America.

The true strength of this country is not in our military might or in the size of our wallet, it is in the hearts and souls of the American people. (Applause.)

I was struck by the comment of a fellow who was rescued from the Gulf Coast and given shelter. He said, "I didn't think there was so much love in the world."

This morning we come together to recognize the source of that great love. We come together before the Almighty in prayer, to reflect on God's will, to seek His aid, and to respond to His grace.

I want to thank you for the fine tradition you continue here today. I pray that our nation will always have the humility to commend our cares to Providence and trust in the goodness of His plans.

May God bless you all. (Applause.)

Senator Coleman: Thank you, Mr. President. Senator Pryor said that we all pray for

you and we want to reiterate that. We know that prayer changes people and prayer changes history, and we send you and the First Lady off with our love and gratitude for spending time with us this morning. We promise to pray like all depends on our prayers. God bless the President and his wife.

We are now going to have a concluding song.

(Song.) ["Waiting in the Wings."] (Applause.)

Senator Coleman: Ladies and gentlemen, Point of Grace.

Senator Pryor: It has been a great morning, hasn't it? (Applause.)

One of the highlights of the year of preparation for this prayer breakfast was for Norm and me to place a phone call to Dr. Billy Graham. And, as most of you know, he was deeply involved, and has been deeply involved, in many prayer breakfasts, especially the early ones. In years past he has been very involved in the National Prayer Breakfast and has helped us develop this model over the last 54 years.

Senator Coleman: We were asking if Dr. Graham could be with us this morning to say our closing prayer but he said that his health would not allow him to travel. But he wanted us all to greet you in the name of the Lord and he said that he would be right here with us praying. He is a national treasure, and we know his prayers have been answered today. We ask that God would sustain him and continue to give him voice to bring our nation and our world together.

And now we have a very special moment to conclude in prayer. When we began to put this breakfast together beginning almost a year ago, our prayer was that it not just be another annual event, but that it address the deepest needs of the world that are unique to this moment in time and history. In the messages we have heard from Bono and the President, we have touched the heart of the world situation today. In addition, we would like all to welcome to the podium a very distinguished guest, a courageous leader in the pursuit of peace in the Middle East, King Abdullah bin al-Hussein II of Jordan. Your Majesty, please join us up here. (Applause.)

King Abdullah bin al-Hussein II: Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim—In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

My friend Bono, Senator Coleman, Senator Pryor, all of you, thank you very much for the honor to stand with you today, as a brother with people of faith, to reaffirm our common values and beliefs. The principles that we gather to recognize today are grounded in the firmest of foundations, our scriptural heritage.

For Muslims, the essence of the Koran is its opening chapter, Al-Fatiha, each of whose verses echoes the teachings of the Torah and the Gospels. The Koran begins, "In the name of God, the Infinitely Good, the All-Merciful." This reflects the famous verse of the Psalms, "We will remember the name of our Lord." The next line of the Koran, "Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds" reminds us of the words of the Psalm, "Let every thing that has breath praise the Lord." The following line, "the Infinitely Good, the All-Merciful," reaffirms the Psalm "gracious is the Lord and righteous." Yes, our God is merciful. The Koran then confirms that God is master of the day of judgment, as does the Good Book: "He has prepared his throne for judgment. He shall judge the world in righteousness."

The last three lines of the Fatiha are supplication. "Thee we worship and Thee we ask for help. Guide us upon the straight path, the path of those on whom is Thy grace, not those upon whom is anger nor those who are astray." This recalls the final words that Jesus—may peace and blessings be upon

him—taught us in the Lord's Prayer: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen."

I now ask you all to join in a special prayer for the Middle East, that not one more generation will grow up knowing conflict and injustice, nor suffer from poverty or oppression; that not one more family will lose a loved one to war and bitterness; and that together, Muslim, Jew and Christian, we can create a new future for the Holy Land, a future of hope, a future of promise, a future of peace.

Let us remember the words of Amos, the words that Dr. Martin Luther King urged for all peoples and all time: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream." Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Senator Pryor: Let us pray. Lord, we are grateful for your presence among us. You made us and you love us, so to be in your presence is what our lives are all about. We stand as people from all walks of life, many backgrounds and traditions, as a circle of friends. We know your love waits in the wings, and we ask you to bring it onto the world stage. We grieve for our fellow human beings who suffer the pain and hardship and bereavement of war and disease. We pray especially for the children. May they somehow escape the destruction, the mental scars that would lead them to want to make war in their own adulthood. Lord, as your servant the King has asked, we pray for the peace of the Middle East. We pray that you would restrain the forces of evil, and raise up and propel forward the leaders of peace.

Senator Coleman: Lord, we pray for the people of Africa. We pray that we would each individually in our roles as leaders allow our hearts to be broken by the things that break the heart of the Lord. May we join together in medical solutions and financial solutions and economic solutions which rescue that continent from the problems that it has. We thank you for the joy and faith of the African people. May their example of grace in the face of suffering inspire us all. And Lord, that which we pray for, give us the strength to work for. And together may we say the ancient benediction from the Torah: The Lord bless you and keep you.

Senator Pryor: The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Senators Coleman and Pryor: The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. And all of God's people together said: Amen.

Senator Coleman: Thank you all for coming and go in peace. (Applause.)

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RETIREMENT OF JEROLD L. HARRIS

● Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, today I wish to publicly recognize Jerold L. Harris, president and CEO of U.S. AgBank, FCB, in Wichita, KS. Jerold will retire in January 2007 following a 43-year career in the Farm Credit System.

Jerold is a native of South Dakota, growing up near Denby. He attended high school in Gordon, NE, just across the State line. After receiving a bachelor's degree in agricultural business from Colorado State University in 1963, he went to work for the Farm Credit System, where he has served agriculture and rural America ever since.

Throughout his distinguished career, Jerold has demonstrated a positive leadership style based on cooperation, mutual respect, and trust. His focus has always been on working toward solutions that serve all of agriculture. He exemplifies a statement he often quotes, "There is no limit to progress when people work together." Jerold has certainly demonstrated this throughout his career.

One particular achievement stands out during Jerold's 43 years of service. In January 2002, the Western Farm Credit Bank in Sacramento, CA, entered into a joint management agreement with the Farm Credit Bank of Wichita, KS. The board of directors named Jerold as president and chief executive officer. Under this agreement, Jerold combined the operations of these two banks while developing and implementing a merger strategy that resulted in the merger of the two banks and the formation of U.S. AgBank, FCB, effective October 1, 2003. A milestone was achieved with the unanimous approval of the merger by all voting stockholders. Following the merger, Jerold quickly leveraged the operational and financial strengths of the previous organizations and achieved the cost savings anticipated in the joint management agreement and merger. He focused the new organization on supporting associations in their objective of service to farmers and ranchers. He capitalized on the synergies created by the merger, increasing patronage and lowering costs to associations affiliated with U.S. AgBank. Significant credit goes to Jerold for establishing a culture within the new district that is based on trust and mutual respect between the bank and associations. Today, U.S. AgBank covers all or parts of 11 States and has total assets of almost \$20 billion.

While leading U.S. AgBank, or one of its predecessor institutions, Jerold implemented utilization of continuous improvement strategies that resulted in streamlined Bank operations, improved effectiveness of services provided to associations, and reduced costs. He improved competitive pricing and established effective asset/liability management, new loan products, sophisticated profitability measurement, and cost accounting systems. A correspondent lending function, focused on the purchase of large loan participations, was developed under his leadership. He also led the formation of AgVantis, Inc., a technology service provider for Farm Credit System institutions. Direct lender agricultural credit associations and Federal land credit associations were formed and patronage programs that resulted in payment of significant amounts of patronage to Associations were implemented on his watch.

There is an old saying that a true warrior must be tested under fire. Many of you will remember the 1980s as a very difficult time for agriculture. From 1986 thru 1990, Jerold was the

chief executive officer of the jointly managed Ninth District Federal Land Bank Association and Ninth District Production Credit Association. These entities were formed from the merger of 40 farm credit associations during that difficult agricultural lending climate. Jerold was successful in establishing an effective management structure for the new associations and achieved financial stability by significantly reducing risk and nonearning assets and focusing the organization on customer service. As agricultural conditions improved, Jerold developed and implemented a reorganization plan for the two associations, resulting in the establishment of six new production credit associations and eight new Federal land bank associations. While the 1980s may not be remembered by many in agriculture as a time of great reward, Jerold demonstrated the same ability to work with people and achieve great things in the difficult times, as he did when agriculture was more prosperous.

During his career, Jerold held numerous leadership positions of progressively increasing responsibility and impact in the Farm Credit System. Jerold has served as a loan officer, an appraiser, a recruiter and a trainer, a supervisor and a manager, a leader and a follower, but always with the same dedication and sense of purpose. He mentored a long list of people who continue to serve Farm Credit and agriculture today, many of whom are in senior positions all around the Farm Credit System.

But Jerold's service was not only on the local or district level, he also served on numerous national or system-wide boards and leadership groups. Jerold served 15 years as a member of the Farm Credit System Presidents Planning Committee, during 3 of which he served as chairman. Jerold also served 11 years on the board of directors of the Federal Farm Credit Banks Funding Corporation, with 3 of those years as chairman. He also serves on the board of directors of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, NCFC, and is a member of the NCFC Executive Council.

Jerold is a familiar face here in Washington, DC. He has represented the Farm Credit System by testifying before the Senate and House Agriculture Committees of the U.S. Congress on numerous occasions. Jerold has always believed in honoring one's responsibilities locally but has also shown that it is possible to support initiatives that will provide benefits for the "greater good" of agriculture as well as those system borrowers and owners he served. His honesty and integrity, keen intelligence, and an understanding of people has earned him the respect of his peers, workers, the boards he has served, and the farmers and ranchers he has represented and served.

Jerold's tireless efforts to improve agriculture and rural America will be

truly missed. His countless contributions and leadership, including his steady voice of reason, helped ensure access to credit for both those who were and many who were not Farm Credit System borrowers. His accomplishments speak volumes about his dedication to agriculture and the people who work in agriculture.

Jerold and his wife Janet are looking forward to his retirement as an opportunity to see old friends, travel to new places, and do a little fishing. It is a great pleasure for me to share his impressive record of service with my colleagues in the Senate, and I hope this U.S. Senate record will stand as an inspiration to others.●

TRIBUTE TO ROBERTA TILL-RETZ

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today, I wish to pay tribute to a very special Iowan, Roberta Till-Retz, who is retiring this month after more than two and a half decades as a scholar and leader at the University of Iowa Labor Center.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that "the arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice." I would add, however, that it doesn't bend all by itself. It does so because of the dedication, passion, and tireless strivings of people like Roberta Till-Retz.

In addition to her work as an instructor at the University of Iowa Labor Center, Roberta has worn many other hats. She has been a prolific author, a respected scholar, an enormously popular teacher, a mentor to up-and-coming union activists, and a valued consultant to the labor community, not just in Iowa but nationally.

One key to Roberta's success is that she is both a student of organized labor and also a deeply experienced veteran of the labor movement. Over the years, she has served as executive director of the Iowa Federation of Labor's Iowa Labor History Oral Project, as vice president of the United Association for Labor Education, and as book review editor for the *Labor Studies Journal*.

Here in Washington, we are daily witness to the persuasion of power. By contrast, Roberta's trademark is the power of persuasion, the passion of her advocacy. She is deeply committed to social and economic justice, and that is what drives her dedication to unions and collective bargaining. The lesson she has taught to thousands of students down through the years is that it was organized labor that fought for and won the minimum wage, the 40-hour workweek, safe workplace standards, workman's compensation, decent pensions, and health insurance. And out of those victories emerged the great middle class in this country.

So I salute Roberta Till-Retz for a job brilliantly done. As long as I have known her, she has always had a tank full of enthusiasm and a heart full of dreams, so I am sure that she will continue to contribute powerfully to the family of organized labor in Iowa and nationally.