She was honored by the university in 1990 with the dedication of the Claudine Williams Residence Hall.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to recognize my good friend Claudine. Her hard work and efforts on behalf of the community should be emulated. I applaud Claudine Williams on her success and I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize that Americans took 10.3 billion trips on public transportation in 2007, and recognize the significant impact public transit use can have on improving the environment. This growth in transit usage represents a 2.1 percent increase over 2006, and is the highest level of transit ridership our country has experienced in the past 50 years. In the last decade alone, public transportation use has been more than double the growth rate of the population and up substantially over the growth rate for vehicle miles traveled on our Nation's highways for that same period. The American public has proven that riding transit—especially at such record levels—helps relieve congestion in our crowded cities, addresses climate change and energy independence, and improves the daily lives of our citizens.

Public Transportation and its relationship to the environment is further explored in a new study from the Transportation Research Board and the Division on Earth and Life Studies of the National Research Council entitled ''Potential Impacts of Climate Change on U.S. Transportation'' (Special Report 290). This report highlights the consequences of climate change for the infrastructure and operations of U.S. transportation. Specifically, the report provides an overview of the scientific consensus on those current and future climate changes of particular relevance to U.S. transportation; identifies potential impacts on all transportation modes; examines adaptation options; and offers recommendations for both research and actions that can be taken to prepare for climate change.

The report also summarizes important strategies for reducing transportation-related emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2)—the primary greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Currently, public transportation plays a vital role in reducing emissions because it produces less carbon monoxide, fewer volatile organic compounds, and nearly half as much carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides for every passenger mile traveled as compared to traveling with private vehicles. Using public transportation helps the Nation save 1.4 billion gallons of gasoline every year, the equivalent of 108 million cars filling up, about 300,000 tanks of gas each day. If Americans rode transit at the rate of 10 percent of daily travel, the U.S. would reduce its dependence on oil imported from the Persian Gulf by more than 40 percent.

For these reasons and more, I support public transportation and pledge to continue the strong Federal partnership with our local communities in providing the necessary resources to offer even more citizens the opportunity to choose transit for their daily commutes. Increased Federal support for public transportation will only further the national goals of addressing climate change, reducing our dependency on foreign oil, and renewing our commitment to environmental stewardship.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO PENDER RHYNES

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Pender Rhynes, a retired Chief Master Sergeant for the United States Air Force.

Pender Rhynes was born on June 23, 1945 in Campbellton, Florida. After graduating high school in 1963, Pender joined the United States Air Force, where he served twenty-six and a half years before retiring. He served five different stateside tours and three overseas tours, including the Vietnam War. During the Vietnam War, Pender was a team leader and he was responsible for making major repairs on many F–105 Fighter-Bomber aircraft. He also worked with F–117A Stealth Fighters at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. When Pender retired from the United States Air Force, he had earned the Rank of Chief Master Sergeant, which is the highest attainable enlisted rank in the U.S. Air Force.

Since his retirement, Pender has worked for the State of Nevada Unemployment Insurance Claims Office in Las Vegas. He has worked there as a Career Enhancement Program Representative and has since been appointed manager. He has achieved some of the highest production ever, helping thousands of Nevadans receive the training they need to attain successful employment. Pender is married to Gloria Olds and they have two sons, Anthony and Phillip. Pender also is the proud grandfather of seven wonderful grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Pender Rhynes. I would like to thank him for his service to our country and our community. I wish him the very best in his current successes and his future endeavors.

HONORING THE MADISON HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS GYMNASTICS TEAM

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, on February 15, 2008, the Madison High School girls gymnastics team from my State of South Dakota won its 14th consecutive state championship. This accomplishment sets a national record for consecutive gymnastics State titles.

The Bulldogs' streak began in 1995 with a narrow victory over Stanley County High School and has continued through this season's dominant victory over runner-up Britton-Hecla High School.

Madison's list of accomplishments goes deeper than just a national record. The Bulldogs' victory streak is the longest in South Dakota history—for any sport—and the team holds the State record for highest team score in their class. In addition, Madison gymnasts have won 47 individual State titles during the streak, setting State class records for the balance beam, floor exercise and vault. In addition, Madison's Kristen Osterberg set a record with 14 career State titles from 1996 to 2001.

Led by former coach Linda Collignon and current coach Maridee Dossett, Madison has set a standard by which teams from all across the country can be judged. With a focus on team success first, the Madison gymnastics program doesn't just produce champions, it also creates individuals better prepared to take on all the challenges life can present.

Madam Speaker, it is with enduring pride and respect that I rise today in recognition of the Madison gymnastics team on the occasion of their record-breaking achievement. Their achievement is not only measured in the dominating statistics of their string of victories over fourteen years, but also in how they work together as a team in their commitment to excellence. The Madison gymnastics team has proven itself worthy to be counted among the most dominant high school athletic dynasties in the Nation.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES E. HANSEN

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. James E. Hansen, the Director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, as this year's recipient of the Desert Research Institute's 21st Annual Nevada Medal. This award is Nevada's highest achievement in the area of scientific study and research.

The Nevada Medal was first given out in 1988 and has been bestowed annually upon a scientist whose work has great impact on the field of science and engineering. Dr. Hansen joins an esteemed list of recipients.

Dr. Hansen earned all of his degrees from the University of Iowa which includes a Bachelor of Arts in Physics and Mathematics, a Masters of Science in Astronomy, and a Ph.D. in Physics. In addition to his numerous publications, research and his work with NASA, Dr. Hansen is also a professor at Columbia University.

He has studied the effects of greenhouse gases throughout his career and has developed and applied various models to note the effects these gases have on climate change and other areas. Dr. Hansen has been a consistent speaker warning about the possible effects of greenhouse gas emissions and the possible benefits of decreasing these gases being emitted.

I wish to also congratulate the Desert Research Institute on another year of service and their continued success in the areas of quality of the air, the water, and the land that surrounds us. The effects of their tireless work and research are felt throughout Nevada and across the globe.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Mr. James E. Hansen for being selected as this