

university educational expenses as well as a demanding academic program concentrating in science, math, and engineering. The UMBC corporate community is able to use the talents of the students while providing internships, jobs, and research opportunities.

The Meyerhoff Scholarship Program has become a leading national model for diversifying America's scientific and engineering workforce, preparing large numbers of African Americans and others for careers in science, medicine, engineering, information technology, teaching, and public health.

On April 4 and 5, the Meyerhoff Scholarship students, their mentors, professors, and families will gather for a research symposium to celebrate their 20 years of progress and success. I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting the vision and perseverance of UMBC president Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski and the generosity of Robert Meyerhoff and his late wife Jane. Together they have changed lives and expectations.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. WALTER PAVASARIS

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a visionary in the field of music education, Dr. Walter Pavasaris. Dr. Pavasaris, a native of New Britain, CT, has been selected to receive the Massachusetts Music Educators Distinguished Service Award.

Walter M. Pavasaris has been a music educator and curriculum coordinator in Massachusetts for the past 31 years. During that time he has taught all levels of K-12 music, including both general and instrumental, as well as teaching undergraduate and graduate level courses in various collegiate settings. In Walter's position as coordinator of fine and performing arts for the Lexington Public Schools, he is responsible for the implementation of the K-12 curriculum in the areas of music, visual arts, and drama. He leads a faculty of 41 highly motivated professional artists/educators. In addition to his responsibilities in Lexington, Walter also serves on the music education faculty at the Boston Conservatory of Music.

In 1971, Walter graduated from the University of Hartford, Hartt College of Music, with a bachelor of music education degree. While at Hartt he studied double bass with Bert Turetzky, Leland Tolo, and also traveled to Boston and Tanglewood to study with William Rhein, associate principal double bassist of the Boston Symphony. While completing his undergraduate degree at Hartt, Walter was active as a freelance musician playing in a variety of small combos and big bands in the greater Hartford, CT, area. Additionally, he played in the Smith College Orchestra, Springfield, MA, Symphony and New Britain, CT, Symphony. In his senior year Walter was recognized by Hartt College of Music as an Outstanding Music Educator based on his outstanding leadership, participation, and scholarship in the field of music.

Following his graduation from Hartt College of Music, Walter won an audition and was selected to become a member of the U.S. Military Academy Band at West Point, NY. During the next 3 years he played sousaphone in the marching band and double bass in the concert band and chamber orchestra. While at West Point, Walter was a member of the Hudson Valley Philharmonic Orchestra. During this time, he studied with New York Philharmonic double bassist Orin O'Brien.

Upon his discharge from the Army, Walter began his graduate studies at the University of Michigan majoring in stringed instruments. While at Michigan, he was a teaching fellow in the String Department. He studied double bass with Larry Hurst. During his years at Michigan, Walter played in a variety of orchestral ensembles and was the double bassist in the wind ensemble conducted by H. Robert Reynolds. He earned his master of music in string instruments in December 1976.

In September of 1977, Dr. Pavasaris joined the music faculty of the Belmont, MA, public schools. During his first few years in Belmont, his teaching responsibilities included being the director of orchestras and string teacher for grades 3 to 12, and conducting one of the middle school bands. As string enrollments flourished, his responsibilities shifted to overseeing the entire string and orchestral curriculum in grades 3 to 12. In addition to teaching large heterogeneous grouped weekly string lessons in each of the elementary schools, Walter encouraged his students to also be part of the very popular "Saturday Morning" music program, which he administered during many of the years he was in Belmont. It was in this program that all elementary students, studying an instrument, received a small homogeneously grouped lesson as well as the opportunity to participate in either the All-Town String Orchestra or Band.

During his years in Belmont, the Belmont High School and Chenery Middle School Orchestras expanded their music making both within and outside the community. Under his baton, the middle and high school orchestra ensembles consistently earned superior ratings at numerous State, regional, and international music festivals. Additionally, the Belmont High School Orchestra was selected to perform at the All-Eastern MENC Conference in Boston in 1983.

In 1990, Walter was appointed coordinator of fine and performing arts for the Lexington Public Schools. His primary responsibilities include advocating for the arts and creating and implementing curricula in the areas of music, visual arts, and drama. Along with advocating for the arts among a wide array of constituencies, he also supervises and evaluates the K-12 fine and performing arts faculty. Throughout his tenure in Lexington, the arts have maintained an integral place within each student's basic education.

Coordinating an outstanding professional faculty with a supportive administration and community, Walter has continuously modeled his passion and belief that music is a lifelong endeavor that transcends, gender, age and ethnicity.

Throughout his professional life, Dr. Pavasaris has positively impacted many young music educators while serving on the faculty of many institutions within the greater Boston area, including the Boston Conservatory of Music, New England Conservatory of Music, and Boston University. As a member of the music education faculty at the Boston Conservatory of Music since the late 1980s, Walter has taught a variety of methods classes as well as classes in string pedagogy and conducting. He also had an integral part in redefining, reshaping, and changing the direction of the music education curriculum at TBC to address the needs of the contemporary educator. For 11 years, Dr. Pavasaris enthusiastically conducted the Boston University All-University Orchestra. The orchestra, which was comprised of nonmusic majors, played for the sheer enjoyment of making good music. Whether teaching conducting, string pedagogy, or instrumental methods, Walter's students have experienced his enthusiasm and passion for the artistry of being a musician and educator.

As a conductor, Walter has had the distinct privilege of conducting festival orchestras in all four Massachusetts districts as well as throughout New England. In 1992 and from 1999 to 2001 Walter was the guest conductor of the U.S. Youth Ensemble String Orchestra during their European Tours. During the 2004 and 2005 seasons he served as music director of the Nashoba Youth Orchestras. Currently, he is the music director and conductor of the Arlington, MA, Philharmonic Orchestra, a post he has held since 1980; associate music director and associate conductor of the Metrowest Orchestra; and conductor of the northshore Youth Symphony Senior Orchestra. In 1992, Dr. Pavasaris was the recipient of the Paul Smith Memorial Conductor of the Year Award presented by the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors' Association. In 1996, the Massachusetts Music Educators' Association named Dr. Pavasaris as a recipient of the Lowell Mason Award acknowledging his numerous contributions to music and music education.

Throughout his career, Walter has had the good fortune to be associated with many wonderful colleagues and students. He is however, most thankful for the patience, understanding, and encouragement of his wife Beverly and son Christopher, who currently works in my office as a staff assistant.

Making music is an endeavor that can be enjoyed, cherished, and celebrated regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. It is inspiring to realize that the personal and professional contributions of Dr. Pavasaris will only continue to grow through the works of

very people that Walter has come into contact with. It is with great pride that I recognize such a dedicated visionary in the field of music education.●

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL MICHAEL P. BARBERO

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I wish to publicly commend and congratulate COL Michael P. Barbero, U.S. Army, upon his retirement after 26 years of military service. I have come to know and respect Colonel Barbero over the last 4 years, during which time he served as the Chief of the Army Senate Liaison Division in the Office of the Army Chief of Legislative Liaison. In that capacity, Colonel Barbero was instrumental in improving the understanding of senators and staff concerning a vast myriad of Army issues, in particular an understanding of the Army's role in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the effect of those wars on the Army and its soldiers and their families.

Colonel Barbero escorted over 50 congressional delegations, including 13 to Iraq and 3 to Afghanistan. I myself was privileged to have Colonel Barbero as an escort at my specific request on several of my own trips to both of those areas. He worked tirelessly to ensure my visits were coordinated with all of the relevant agencies and individuals so that I could visit the places, meet with the people, and deal with the issues that were critical for me as the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. I am extremely grateful for the service he provided me and my staff during those trips.

Colonel Barbero's Senate assignment was the capstone to an outstanding career of service to our Nation. After graduating from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1982, Colonel Barbero served as an armor officer in command and staff positions in a number of tank and cavalry units in the United States and Germany. These assignments culminated in a position as the operations officer for the 2nd Brigade of the famed 1st Cavalry Division.

Colonel Barbero also served in a number of high-level positions on both the Army and Joint Staffs at the Pentagon, as an exercise planner, analyst, and strategist. As an assistant professor at the U.S. Military Academy, Colonel Barbero played an important role in the development of the future officers and leaders of the Army.

Colonel Barbero holds a master of science degree in industrial engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology. His military awards include the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Ranger Tab, Parachutist Badge, and is a holder of the Army Armor Association's Order of St. George.

Colonel Barbero is married to the former Vicki Jo Drake of Storm Lake, IA. They have two children, Mary—14—and Michael—10. I congratulate them

too on their husband's and father's retirement from the Army. The demands of military life are such that military families also sacrifice and serve the Nation along with their soldier.

Mr. President, the Army, the Senate, and the Nation are lucky to have had the service of such a great soldier. He will be sorely missed.●

CONGRATULATING LANCE MACKEY

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I congratulate Lance Mackey, of Fairbanks, AK, on achieving the incredible feat of twice winning the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race and the Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race—two 1,000-mile races—in the same year. Last year, Lance became the first musher ever to win both races in the same calendar year. An achievement, which was previously labeled impossible, has for the second consecutive year been accomplished by Lance Mackey and his team.

For those who are unfamiliar with either the Iditarod or the Yukon Quest, these races are the world's two longest dogsled races. Both races, which span over 1,000 miles of rigid mountains, frozen tundra, and dense forests, are true tests of determination and dedication. Not only does the rugged terrain pose a huge challenge, but so does the weather, which frequently drops to 30 or 40 degrees below zero, and the wind, which can gust up to 100 miles per hour.

The annual Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race is a 1,000-mile international trek from Fairbanks, AK, to Whitehorse, Canada. Lance Mackey and his team of canine athletes crossed this great distance in 10 days, 12 hours, and 14 minutes, claiming victory for the fourth year in a row.

Only 11 days after his Yukon Quest victory, Lance and six of his dogs that competed in the Yukon Quest joined seven of his other dogs and began the 1,100-mile Iditarod Sled Dog Race. This race, which starts in Willow, AK, and ends in Nome, AK, commemorates the 1925 diphtheria serum relay run where dogsled teams had to pass along a vaccine from Anchorage to Nome in order to save countless lives. The Iditarod race is no longer run as a relay but is a race completed by individual dogsled teams.

The 1,100-mile journey travels primarily through the great Alaskan wilderness. Throughout this year's Iditarod, Lance Mackey was challenged by not only the weather and terrain but also by other extraordinary mushers such as the 2006 Iditarod winner, Jeff King, and other previous winners of this great race. On the morning of March 12, 2008, thousands gathered at the famous burlwood arch on Front Street in Nome, AK, to cheer on Lance Mackey, as he sledged to back-to-back wins at the Iditarod, beating the odds as well as the extremely competitive international field. Lance Mackey and his team of canines com-

pleted the race in 9 days, 11 hours, and 46 minutes, beating four-time Iditarod champion Jeff King by 1 hour and 19 minutes.

For the past few years, Lance has shown a mastery of working with and training canine athletes for the sport of dog mushing. As the Anchorage Daily News aptly stated:

A musher doesn't win four straight, 1,000 mile Yukon Quests and two straight Iditarods by making dogs run. He wins by making dogs want to run.

Lance Mackey continues to impress all of us with his remarkable achievements and record-setting performances. It is my honor to stand before this body today to congratulate Lance Mackey and his team of amazing dogs. Lance is a world-class dog musher and a true Alaskan hero, and I wish him and his team all the success in the future.●

TRIBUTE TO WILL ETTA "WILLIE" OATES

● Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I wish to honor the life of a woman revered across the State of Arkansas as a humble public servant. Will Etta "Willie" Oates, affectionately known as the "Hat Lady," passed away on March 4, 2008. She was loved for her active volunteerism and Arkansas pride.

Although she was born in Kansas, she was an Arkansan through and through. Willie was born to Harry and Fern Long in Arkansas City, KS, on January 14, 1918. She graduated from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville where she was a cheerleader and met her life-long husband, Dr. Gordon Oates. It was at the university that she earned the nickname Willie.

After World War II, Willie began her career of volunteerism in Little Rock. She was selected as Little Rock Woman of the Year in 1955. In 1959, she became the first woman elected to the Arkansas Legislature in more than 30 years.

Yet, it was her "hat skits" that captured people's attention. She traveled across Arkansas and more than 40 States speaking, performing her hat skits, judging various competitions, and serving as a grand marshal at many parades. In 1989, she was officially designated by proclamation of the State legislature as "Arkansas's Hat Lady."

During her lifetime, Willie belonged to over 50 national, State, and local organizations, served on over 25 boards, and was active in the First Presbyterian Church of Little Rock.

Willie Oates was my dear friend and an inspiration to all that knew her. I pay tribute to this public servant of Arkansas and express my greatest condolences to her family. She will be missed.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to