

Canyon Lake All-Star Little League team, in alphabetical order, are as follows: Logan Anderson, Cale Fierro, Tanner Hagen, Jonah Hanson, Bill Hendricks, Matt Minnick, TJ Nolan, Mark Petereit, Jesse Riddle, Tanner Simons, Carter Wevik, Matt Wilson, and Alec Winter.

As a father of two student athletes, I know firsthand how much time and effort is needed from parents and families in order for our children to succeed. It is because of their support that these young people were able to reach this outstanding accomplishment. All of these families should be commended for the dedication they put forth to support their children.

All of these players should be commended for their efforts. These athletes should be very proud of all their remarkable achievements. On behalf of the State of South Dakota, I am please to say congratulations Canyon Lake All-Stars on this impressive accomplishment and keep up the good work.●

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL GREGG BLANCHARD

● Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I rise to pay tribute to COL Gregg Blanchard, U.S. Army, on the occasion of his retirement after over 21 years of dedicated service. He is a true patriot and exceptional military leader—a living example of what is good about America.

Colonel Blanchard and his wife, Barb, both hail from Rapid City, SD. “Doc,” as he is known to his friends, is a proud graduate of Rapid City Central High School and the University of South Dakota. Barb graduated from Rapid City Stevens High School, and from National College in Rapid City.

Colonel Blanchard served successfully in every echelon of the Army, from the platoon to the theater army. He commanded troops at the company and battalion level and served a combat tour in Iraq as the Deputy G4, V Corps. As a logistics officer, Colonel Blanchard’s entire career has been devoted to the care and support of his fellow soldiers and their families. Over 9 of his 21 years were served overseas, where he tirelessly focused on supporting our warriors and their families.

He commanded the 701st Main Support Battalion of the famous 1st Infantry Division—the Big Red One. In this assignment, he supervised the training and welfare of over 1,100 soldiers and their families. His superb leadership and organizational ability were critical to the smooth redeployment of the division from Germany to the United States during the drawdown of forces in Europe. Colonel Blanchard’s superb leadership and positive attitude were contagious and inspired everyone around him to give their best effort.

As the Deputy G4, V Corps and Deputy C-4, Multi-National Corps—Iraq, Colonel Blanchard supervised logistical support to all forces operating in the Iraq Theater of Operations. His super-

rior skills as a leader, planner and communicator led to several notable assignments in the Pentagon with tours on the Army Staff, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

The Army recognized the unique abilities of Colonel Blanchard and selected him as one of four Active Army officers to serve as a Congressional Fellow in 2003. In that capacity he served this body for a year in the office of Senator Mark Dayton from Minnesota. This assignment led to other legislative liaison assignments in the Army and the Joint Staff.

When the first U.S. congressional delegation to Libya in 35 years occurred, then-Lieutenant Colonel Blanchard was selected to escort and coordinate the logistical challenges and country schedules for the trip. He was also instrumental in improving the Army’s process for congressional notification of our fallen soldiers, and for improving the Army’s responsiveness to the tens of thousands of inquiries it receives annually from Members of Congress.

In his current assignment as the Deputy Legislative Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colonel Blanchard provides critical assistance to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. His advice and counsel is regularly sought by senior defense leaders in the Army, the Joint Community and by Members of Congress and their staffs.

For over 21 years, Colonel Blanchard served this great country from locations all across the world. Whether mentoring and training young troops as a commander, providing for soldiers in combat, developing and affecting policy in the Pentagon, or working with Congress, he served with honor and distinction. He will indeed be remembered as an exceptional officer, a true patriot, a courageous warrior and a dedicated leader with the highest integrity and compassion for all who had the distinct honor of serving with him.

Barb and their children, Brittany and Alex, have demonstrated unwavering support throughout Colonel Blanchard’s distinguished career. This Nation is also grateful for their sacrifices that enabled Colonel Blanchard to serve with such distinction. Wherever he served, COL Gregg Blanchard set the highest standards of service, professionalism and leadership.●

TRIBUTE TO ART DAWSON

● Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I honor Art Dawson of Rapid City, SD, for receiving the President’s Volunteer Service Award for volunteering 4,000 hours to his community and to the Nation over the course of his lifetime.

Art Dawson’s outstanding service for others began in 1950 when he joined the U.S. Army. After 30 dedicated years in the military, Art retired as a lieutenant

colonel in medical administration, but his desire to serve others continued. Following his retirement Art worked in the veteran’s administration in California and volunteered for 7 years with the Red Cross. Art moved to Rapid City, SD, in 1996 and immediately became an active and valuable member of the Rapid City Community. Since Art moved to the Rapid City area, he has volunteered himself to countless organizations including the Humane Society, the Pennington County Sheriff’s Department, CASA, and the Meals Program. His selfless devotion and faithful service to others and to his community is truly commendable.

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Art Dawson for receiving this honorable award, and thank him for all his years of service to South Dakota and our Nation.●

TRIBUTE TO KRISTIE FIEGEN

● Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I recognize the accomplishments of Junior Achievement of South Dakota. In particular, I would like to congratulate the organization’s President, Kristie Fiegen, for winning JA Worldwide’s 2008 Charles R. Hook Award. This award is bestowed on one Junior Achievement executive annually, and is the top honor for JA Presidents who demonstrate superior results in promoting the growth and development of Junior Achievement in their area.

Junior Achievement is the world’s largest organization dedicated to teaching students in Kindergarten through 12th grade about the importance of economics, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. The organization reaches over 9 million students around the world each year, with over 130 local offices in the United States and operations in over 110 countries worldwide. One of the things that makes JA so unique is its use of adult volunteers to bring business to life for students. In the U.S. alone, young people in more than 188,000 classrooms benefit annually from these positive role models.

Kristie is clearly deserving of receiving this year’s Hook Award. She has served as President of Junior Achievement of South Dakota since 1994. During this period, she has increased the organization’s reach from 2 percent to more than 28 percent of all South Dakota students. The organization now reaches over 37,000 South Dakota students, impacting over 1,700 classrooms. The organization’s programs are provided at no cost to schools and are funded entirely through the private sector.

Especially in the current economic climate, teaching students the importance of economics and financial literacy is of the utmost importance, and I congratulate Kristie Fiegen and Junior Achievement of South Dakota for their efforts in South Dakota.●