

taught Tlingit history, language and literature, retiring again in 1974.

You may have discovered that it is difficult to use the words retirement and Walter Soboleff in the same sentence. Every time Walter Soboleff retires he embarks on a new and ever more vital project.

Awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity by Dubuque University in 1952 and an honorary Doctor of Humanities by the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1968 he continues to serve as Pastor Emeritus of the Northern Lights United Church in Juneau and as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Sealaska Heritage Foundation. And lest I forget, he was the first Alaska Native to serve on the Alaska State Board of Education, where he served as chairman.

I think I can speak for the entire Senate in wishing the Reverend Doctor Walter Soboleff a happy 100th birthday. We extend our best wishes to Dr. Soboleff for continued good health and good works.●

RECOGNIZING LARRY G. SALYERS

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I wish today to congratulate Larry G. Salyers on his years of service as the manager of Tri-State Airport. Larry's hard work and continuous efforts have greatly enhanced this important regional airport as well as the community it serves. I am honored to have served with him and to share his story with you today.

In December 1975, Larry began working at the airport as Director of Operations and Security. He exhibited extraordinary dedication and hard work and, in March 1980 he was promoted to assistant airport manager. In 1981, he was named acting manager and by May 1982 he was appointed as the airport manager.

Under Larry's leadership, the airport has experienced many positive changes. He has overseen numerous structural renovations in Tri-State's terminal design and the conditions of the runways. At present, the airport is in the process of a major runway extension which will allow Tri-State to continue its reputation for excellence for many years to come. Larry has also diligently worked to ensure that the airport has the best maintenance vehicles and equipment possible.

Throughout his long service, Larry has seen Tri-State Airport through some of the aviation industry's hardest times. He has seen the deregulation of the industry which left many small communities across the country with significantly diminished air service. The September 11 terrorist attacks also had enormous repercussions throughout the aviation business as many airlines went into bankruptcy and new security measures were required at all the Nation's airports. Tri-State, like many small airports across the country, is often the first to feel the pain during trying times for the

aviation industry and the last to recover. Despite these challenges, Larry was able to successfully keep everything going, and I am pleased to say that in recent years, Tri-State Airport has seen significant financial and passenger growth. Between 2006 and 2007, passenger traffic increased by 62 percent, and the airport is currently producing its highest boarding numbers in over 13 years. Much of this success can be directly contributed to Larry's efforts to bring Allegiant's Air's low-fare flights to the airport. This accomplishment has helped Tri-State Airport to contribute roughly \$50 million annually to the local economy.

The hard work and dedication of Larry Salyers personifies the attitude of America and the true nature of West Virginians. When he retires, he will have left Tri-State Airport and the region around the city of Huntington better than it was when he first began his career there over 33 years ago.●

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL HENRY A. "TREY" OBERING, III

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I honor a great American, a native of Birmingham, AL, LTG Henry A. "Trey" Obering III, on the occasion of his retirement after 35 years of dedicated service to our country. His passion for progressing missile defense has been imperative to its success and critical to our national security and the safety of our allies.

General Obering entered the Air Force in 1973 and received his pilot's wings in 1975. From there he went on to become a skilled air-to-air Top Gun-trained F-4E pilot and lead a very distinguished career. As an Air Force captain, General Obering was assigned to the Space Shuttle Program the year before the first orbiter flew into space. General Obering became an important part of this pioneering endeavor and participated in 15 space shuttle launches as a NASA orbiter project engineer.

I want to highlight the critical role General Obering played in developing, testing, and fielding this Nation's ballistic missile defense system. General Obering joined the Missile Defense Agency in December of 2001, the very month the United States announced its withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which had seriously impeded the development and deployment of missile defenses. He deserves credit for the tremendous progress our Nation has made in recent years in the field of missile defense. The advancement of all approaches to ballistic missile defense, BMD, including kinetic energy interceptor, KEI, ground-based mid-course defense, GMD, Aegis ballistic missile defense, and terminal high altitude area defense system, THAAD, can be attributed to the hard work of General Obering and those he has led.

Under General Obering's leadership, the Agency addressed current and

emerging ballistic missile threats by fielding missile defenses at an unprecedented pace to defend the United States, our deployed troops, and U.S. allies and friends around the world. During his tenure as director, the Agency emplaced ground-based interceptors in Alaska and California, developed and deployed missile defenses to defeat shorter-range threats to our troops and our allies, and successfully modified 18 U.S. Navy Aegis warships to give U.S. military commanders a highly effective regional ballistic missile defense capability.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of our missile defense to our friends, our allies, and, importantly, those that would mean us harm, General Obering presided over a series of historic flight tests of our ballistic missile defense system and spearheaded efforts to train the warfighters employing the system. These tests proved to our allies that we are prepared to defend ourselves and our allies and will pursue technologies to further reduce and eventually eliminate the threat of attack by ballistic missiles.

General Obering has pursued an aggressive development program to address future threats, such as boost phase defenses, space tracking and surveillance, and technologies to destroy multiple threat objects using a single interceptor.

General Obering recognized early on the importance of working with our international partners and he led the expansion of the Department's missile defense cooperative activities. He pursued bilateral programs with Japan, Israel, the Czech Republic, and Poland, among others, as well as multilateral programs with NATO. Working closely with the State Department and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, General Obering's vision and personal engagement resulted in a broad consensus among international leaders, combatant commanders, and the international communities on the growing need to establish long-range missile defenses in Europe.

General Obering has overseen the expansion of the Missile Defense Agency. During his tenure, while executing all of the activities in one of the most important programs in the Department of Defense, the Agency successfully underwent unprecedented organizational changes. Thanks to his guidance, this transition is proceeding smoothly.

General Obering's leadership proved critical during two real-world crises. During North Korea's provocative missile launches in July 2006, General Obering oversaw the Agency's input to the Nation's strategic response and provided situational awareness to the President, combatant commanders, and the missile defense community. His assurances that the Nation had the option of a responsive missile defense capability, had it been necessary, contributed greatly to the maintenance of international stability. And in February 2008, General Obering also led the