

TRIBUTE TO VALERIE WOODRUFF

• Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I rise today in recognition of Dr. Valerie Woodruff—like me a native of West Virginia—upon her retirement as secretary of the Delaware Department of Education. Valerie, known to her many admirers in the First State as Val, has dedicated the past 43 years of her career to education and served the last 10 as Delaware's secretary of education, a position I was privileged to nominated her to when I served as Delaware's Governor from 1993–2001.

After receiving her bachelor's degree in secondary education from the Alderson Broaddus College in Philippi, WV, Val began her career in education as an English and social studies teacher at Bohemia Manor High School. She taught for 3 years before becoming a guidance counselor and beginning to work towards her master's degree.

After receiving her master's degree in 1971 from the University of Delaware in guidance and counseling, Val moved to Delaware and became a guidance counselor at Delcastle Technical High School near Wilmington. Five years later, she became the school's assistant principal. During her time at Delcastle, she also served on the Governor's Advisory Council for Career and Vocational Education.

Val worked on her doctorate degree in vocational education and curriculum development at Temple University while serving as assistant principal, then went on to become the principal at Middletown High School in 1984. She was an excellent principal, and her work did not go unnoticed. In June of 1990, she was selected as Principal of the Year by the Delaware Association of Secondary School Principals. During her watch at Middletown High School, the first school-based wellness center was established there. Today, in no small part because of her leadership, every public high school has a wellness center where students receive help and support to enable them to succeed in school and in life.

Later, Dr. Woodruff served as the associate secretary for improvement and assistance in the areas of curriculum and instruction at the department of education for 7 years. In 1999, I nominated her be secretary of education, overseeing the implementation of our State's education improvement plan which focuses on rigorous academic standards; objectively measuring student progress toward those standards; and holding schools, school districts, students, educators and parents accountable for improving student achievement. Val has emerged as a national leader among our Nation's chief school officers and has worked closely with her peers and with the U.S. Department of Education to develop and modify the Leave No Student Behind law and to narrow the achievement in Delaware and across America.

Val has a long list of accomplishments and is leaving big shoes to fill for the next secretary of education.

She is a member of many prestigious boards including the board of directors of the Council of Chief State School Officers on which she was president from 2005–2006, the Southern Regional Education Board on which she was the first K–12 educator to be elected vice-chair, and the Delaware Workforce Investment Board.

Dr. Woodruff also currently serves on the Vision 2015 Steering and Implementation Committee and is on the President's Policy Council for the Alliance for Excellent Education. In addition, she is a valued member of the Delaware Mentoring Council and of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce Partnership.

Through her tireless efforts, Valerie Woodruff has made a positive difference in the lives of tens of thousands of students in Delaware and, in doing so, has enhanced the quality of life in our State for years to come. Upon her retirement, she will leave behind a legacy of commitment to education and to public service for generations to follow. I thank her for the friendship that we share, and I congratulate her on a truly remarkable and distinguished career. In closing, on behalf of the people of Delaware, I want to wish Val and her family the very best in all that lies ahead for each of them.●

RECOGNIZING MERCY CLINICS, INC.

• Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I wish to extend my warm congratulations to Mercy Clinics, Inc., based in Des Moines, for earning the prestigious 2008 Acclaim Award from the American Medical Group Association. This award is an extraordinary honor, given annually to the medical group that best exemplifies delivery of the highest quality health care in the United States.

Mercy Clinics, Inc. operates health care facilities throughout the greater Des Moines area, and has a long history of innovation. The 2008 Acclaim Award is just the latest national recognition of Mercy's exceptional commitment to high-quality patient care—something we deeply appreciate in Iowa.

I prize my long-standing relationship with Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines, the partner of Mercy Clinics. I will be forever grateful to the Sisters of Mercy for providing care to my chronically ill father, many years ago, at a time when my family could not afford the costs of hospitalization. He received not only quality medical attention at Mercy, but also a generous measure of caring and kindness that remain the signature of Mercy Medical Center and Mercy Clinics to this day. The way that Mercy has retained these traditional human factors while providing state-of-the-art, 21st century clinical practice is obviously a winning formula—indeed, an award-winning formula.

In presenting the award, the American Medical Group Association cited

Mercy Clinics' pioneering research into the best ways to care for people with chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. The staff at Mercy Clinics created a program called "Medical Home," which includes a team of "Health Coaches" who review patients' medical records and provide ongoing support for patients both face-to-face and over the phone, including advice on nutrition, exercise, and treatment management. Outcomes showed significant improvement in patient blood sugar and blood pressure control.

I salute the visionary leadership of Dr. David Swieskowski, vice president for quality improvement for Mercy Clinics along with the partners who collaborated to make this project, not only successful, but a national award winner: Wellmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield provided grant funding to hire the first health coaches and whose "pay for performance" program rewards population based care; the Iowa Foundation for Medical Care who provided the Care Measures Disease Registry; Des Moines University who collaborated on health coach education and certification; Pfizer who provided initial health coach training in patient self-management support; the Institute for Healthcare Improvement whose IMPACT program model helped Mercy Clinics shape their program; and New Health Partnerships who also provided grant assistance. I also commend the commitment to quality and excellence that pervades the entire family of Mercy health care professionals.

I congratulate all of them for a job well done. I look forward to working with them—and benefiting from their counsel—as the new 111th Congress addresses health care reform, with a strong emphasis on wellness and prevention.●

TRIBUTE TO JOHN J. LEONE, JR.

• Mr. LIEBERMAN. Madam President, today I wish to honor Mr. John J. Leone, Jr. of Bristol, CT. A dedicated public servant who has served his community for over 40 years, John will retire from his position as president and CEO of the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce at the end of the year.

John has been head of the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce, the third largest chamber in Connecticut, for 18 years. Under his leadership, the chamber grew immensely, going from 450 members to 1,820. John demonstrated a remarkable ability to bring people from all walks of life together behind a project. He played an integral role in securing State and Federal funding for the extension of route 72, which will help commuters in central Connecticut and provide a significant boost to merchants in downtown Bristol.

John's tenure with the chamber was the capstone of a lifetime spent serving Bristol. He was the mayor from 1984–1991, where he was elected to four terms. Before being elected mayor, he