

TRIBUTE TO IRENE GAINER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to congratulate Irene Gainer on her upcoming retirement from Federal service. Most of my colleagues know Irene through her husband, Senate Sergeant at Arms Terry Gainer, but today Irene gets the spotlight as I take a few minutes to recognize her impressive career.

Many great things come from Chicago, including Irene, who was born and raised in Chicago. Chicago is also where she met her husband Terry and started her first career as a nurse. She attended the College of St. Francis and St. Bernard's School of Nursing. During the early years of their marriage, Irene joined Terry as the Navy moved them around the country from Rhode Island to Virginia and then to California. In each State Irene worked as a nurse, and to this day she maintains her licenses and professional credentials in all three States.

Irene also worked in Illinois hospitals, including St. Bernard's Hospital, Christ Hospital, Central Community Hospital, and for 14 years at the Little Company of Mary Hospital.

In 1988, Irene started her second career—she began law school at John Marshall. Irene attended law school during the day, continued working nights as a nurse at Little Company of Mary Hospital, and—did I mention?—she and her husband were raising their six children.

After law school graduation in 1990, Irene accepted a job as Clerk in the Circuit Court of Cook County. She also worked for the State of Illinois as Assistant Director of Health and Energy Policy, served as General Counsel and Executive Director of the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association, and as an associate in a law firm.

Irene and Terry moved to Washington, DC in 1998. While living here in DC, Irene has worked for the National Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities, Sibley Memorial Hospital, and the Peace Corps. And for the past 5 years, she has been Director of the Hearing Office for the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals.

If Irene's busy career is any indication, there is little chance she will spend much idle time in retirement. Between volunteering with her local Catholic church and staying in touch with her six children spread around the world, she is sure to stay active.

I thank Irene for her many years of Federal service and wish her all the best in retirement. And I especially hope that she and Terry find lots of time to spend with their 14 grandchildren.

REMEMBERING ALEXIS "LEXIE"
KAMERMAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on January 17, just days before our Nation observed a day in remembrance of Martin Luther King, Jr., a man recognized for

his nonviolent activism during the civil rights movement, a restaurant in Kabul, Afghanistan, popular with foreigners and expatriates, including Americans, was rocked by a terrorist attack, killing 21 people.

Tragically, we lost one of our own from Illinois during this act of senseless violence: Ms. Alexis "Lexie" Kamerman, a Chicago native who for years had dedicated herself to serving others and only the year prior had moved to Afghanistan, working with the American University there to help increase access to education for Afghan girls and women.

Lexie grew up in Chicago in my home State. She was a 2004 graduate of the Latin School of Chicago, a 2008 graduate of Knox College—where she was also an all-star conference water polo player—and she went on to receive her Masters in Higher Education from the University of Arizona.

Countless friends and family have described Lexie as generous, fearless, and passionate about helping to create a better world. It's no surprise that the 27-year-old found herself in Kabul, working as a student development specialist with American University of Afghanistan. American University of Afghanistan has been committed for years to extend high-quality, affordable education for Afghans, especially girls, who may not have had access to it otherwise.

Sadly, American University of Afghanistan lost another member of its family in the same attack: 29-year-old political science professor Alexandros Petersen from Washington, DC. He and Lexie both were too young, too bright, and too dedicated to helping others to be leaving the world so soon.

Afghanistan has seen many ups and downs over the years. But these heinous attacks on innocent civilians, people such as Lexie who work every day to help the Afghan people achieve a better future, are among the lowest of lows.

My deepest sympathies go out to Lexie's parents, Jack and Alison, and the rest of her family, as well as the family at American University of Afghanistan and to all victims of the attack and their loved ones. It is only fitting that Knox College has created a scholarship in Lexie's name, a well-deserved tribute for a young woman who was so dedicated to others and to the value of education during her all-too-short life.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
MEDICAL RESEARCH

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I rise today to correct some unfortunate remarks made on the floor this month and reaffirm my long-standing support for the medical research programs at the Department of Defense, most of which fall under the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program, or CDMRP. This program has led to major scientific breakthroughs since its cre-

ation in 1992 and it is one of my proudest accomplishments here in the U.S. Senate.

This program was created by me and together with my Defense Appropriations colleagues Senator Ted Stevens and Senator Daniel Inouye specifically in response to grassroots advocacy spearheaded by those who suffer from breast cancer, those who have survived it, and their families. The Department of Defense runs one of the largest health systems in the country, serving 9.6 million servicemembers, their families and military retirees, and as a result offered a unique opportunity to undertake Breast Cancer Research. Military families suffer from the same conditions and diseases that affect our society at large, and they also have disproportionate rates of some diseases as a result of their service. My colleagues and I believed that offering potentially lifesaving research specifically focused on this population was a logical step.

So we started with Breast Cancer research in 1992. In the 22 years this program has been funded, we have spent almost \$3 billion on Breast Cancer research, and \$7.5 billion overall on important research on numerous conditions through the Department of Defense. Millions of Americans, including those who receive their health care from DOD, have been touched by conditions such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis—or Lou Gehrig's disease—autism, lung cancer, multiple sclerosis, neurofibromatosis, ovarian cancer, prostate cancer, tuberous sclerosis complex and many others.

And what has that investment yielded? It has paid dividends, with breakthroughs in our understanding of breast cancer. It led to the development of the revolutionary drug Herceptin that is saving and prolonging the lives of millions of American women every day. DOD breast cancer research directly contributed to the discovery of a frequently mutated gene that contributes to several cancers and the OncoVue breast cancer risk assessment test.

But this program's payoff has not been limited to breast cancer: Those who receive Coenzyme Q10 treatment for gulf war illness can thank DOD medical research. The prostate cancer treatment Zytiga received FDA approval in 2011 due to the rapid early-phase clinical testing funded by DOD. Research jointly funded by CDMRP, the National Institutes of Health—NIH—and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency are creating advanced prosthetics that are accurately recreating the movement of the human hand—which in recent trial allowed a quadriplegic to feed herself for the first time in years. These are just a few small examples of the many research, diagnosis, and treatment breakthroughs this research has brought about.