Carolina, said of him, ''What many of you don't know is that Dirk was a patriot in the truest sense of the word.''

He noted Dirk's six deployments—four to Afghanistan, and one each to Somalia and Kuwait—and the numerous awards, such as the Bronze Star.

Lt. Colonel Clifford told the audience, ''It takes just plain guts. We wonder where you find such young men. Corbin, Kentucky is that place.''

Along with giving thanks to Dirk's parents, the officer singled out Dirk's widow, Maria Shelton—who also serves in the military and is stationed at Fort Bragg.

''Maria, thanks for standing by Dirk during those long trips'' (that he made to serve his country during combat tours and numerous overseas missions).

The military was there in a show of strength and support.

RECOGNIZING THE THOMAS MORE COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a team of national champions that comes from the great State of Kentucky. On March 21, 2015, the Thomas More College women's basketball team, the Saints, won the first ever team championship in their school's history.

The Saints notched an 83-to-63 win over George Fox University in the women's Division III championship game and capped an undefeated season with a record of 33 to 0. They are only the sixth team in the history of Division III women's basketball to go an entire season undefeated. Along the way to their perfect season, they defeated four top 10-ranked teams.

The final game was hosted by Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI, and played in the Van Noord Arena. Thomas More jumped out to an early lead and never trailed in the game. Thomas More's leading scorer in the championship game, Sydney Moss, was also named the NCAA Division III national player of the year by both D3hoops.com and the Women's DIII News. It is the second consecutive year she has earned the award. During the NCAA postseason, Moss broke the NCAA all-division men's and women's scoring record with an incredible 197 points in the Saints' six NCAA tournament games.

Saints head coach Jeff Hans, who guided his team to their first undefeated season and their first national championship, was also named the Division III national coach of the year by both D3hoops.com and the Women's DIII News.

I want to recognize every member of this championship team that is bringing the Women's Division III trophy back to Kentucky. Team members include Kirsten Paul, Kiley Bartels, Abby Owings, Stephanie Krusling, Olivia Huber, Nikki Kiernan, Mikkah Hignite, Sarah Roaden, Kelly McDonald, Sydni Wainscott, Alexa Santamaria, Kaylee Bush, Sydney Moss, Sam Cady, and Hannah Devine. Jeff Hans is the head coach, and he is assisted by Tim Shields, Tanja Speaker, and Jerry Allen. The school's director of athletics is Terry Connor and its president is David Armstrong.

The Kentucky Enquirer recently published an article about the Saints' victory. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Kentucky Enquirer, March 21, 2015]

THOMAS MORE WOMEN WIN DIVISION III NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

(By Adam Turer)

GRAND RAPIDS.—The Division III women's college basketball season began with Mount St. Joseph's Lauren Hill scoring the season's first points in front of a sold crowd at the Cintas Center. It ended with head coach Jeff Hans and the Thomas More Saints hoisting the national championship trophy. With an 83–63 win over George Fox on Saturday night, the Saints earned the first team championship in Thomas More history.

In a battle of 32–0 teams-the first Division III women's championship between two undefeated squads-the Saints controlled from the opening tip. One night after starting 0–7 from the field, Thomas More hit its first three shots to open up an early lead. They never trailed.

George Fox, the 2009 national champion and 2012 runner-up, made it this far behind its relentless full court press. The Saints had faced very little full court pressure this season, for good reason. With Abby Owings, Sydney Moss, and Sydni Wainscott all able to handle point guard duties, the Saints are nearly impossible to trap. Hans went to a four-guard lineup at times with Olivia Huber coming off the bench. The Saints still had to overcome several uncharacteristic turnovers, but balanced those miscues with a bounty of fast break points.

Moss was, as always, the focal point of the opposing defense. It took the nation's leading scorer over 11 minutes to make her first field goal. The two-time national player of the year found other ways to help her team win. She led Thomas More with 19 points, 15 rebounds and 11 assists. The biggest beneficiaries of her defense-breaking ball handling were post players Alexa Santamaria and Nikki Kiernan. Santamaria finished with 14 points on 6–6 shooting, while Kiernan added 16 points on 7–11 shooting. Most of their attempts were wide open looks from within two feet thanks to Moss drawing away helpside defenders and dropping no-look dimes.

The victory was a culmination for the program which began its ascension as a national contender under current Xavier head coach Brian Neal. The success continued under Hans, but the Saints developed a pattern of underwhelming in the postseason. The addition of key transfers and the infusion of several of northern Kentucky's top high school players elevated this year's team to unforeseen heights. Moss did not transfer home from Florida expecting to win a national championship. She drew inspiration from the program's family atmosphere, and the ability to play in front of her family nearly every night. This win brought renewed appreciation for her loved ones.

''You look up and see your mom and think of all the practices she drove you to, all the shoes she bought you, and all the sacrifices she made,'' Moss said after Friday's semifinal win.

Dozens of Saints students, many athletes in other sports, made the trek to Grand Rapids not once, but twice this weekend. They bussed up for Friday's semifinal, back to Crestview Hills, then back up on Saturday. Thomas More fans accounted for roughly 70 percent of the crowd and 90 percent of the crowd noise at Saturday's title game. The team bus will return to Crestview Hills with some new hardware to add to the Connor Convocation Center trophy case.

''The support I cannot say enough about. The pride that they have in their school and excitement to see our programs go to another level,'' said athletic director Terry Connor. ''[There is] a great sense of pride and this is proof that it can be done.''

RECOGNIZING THE OWENSBORO HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' BASKETBALL TEAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, basketball is very important to us in my home State of Kentucky, and that is why I am so honored and pleased to recognize the winners of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) State Basketball Championship for boys. The Owensboro Red Devils won a decisive 74–58 game over rival Bowling Green this March 22.

It is the fourth State championship for Owensboro High School, and the first since 1980 for the Red Devils. Owensboro came into the tournament having shot 55 percent from the field during the first three rounds of the tournament. During the championship game, they never trailed.

Owensboro is only the seventh school in State history to win the championship four times. And Owensboro's head coach, Rod Drake, was a senior on the Owensboro 1980 championship team. A crowd of over 11,000 saw Owensboro clinch the win inside of Lexington's legendary Rupp Arena.

I want to recognize every member of this championship team that is bringing the KHSAA trophy back to Owensboro. Team members include Darius Brown, Deonte Douglas, Gabe Fillman, Jacoby Harris, Aric Holman, James Howard, Darion Marrow, Justin Miller, Ishawn Murphy, Shawn Pendleton, Airius Phillips, Dylan Sanford, Trevor Washington, and Rashai Wimsatt. Matthew Cook and Seth Garrard are student managers. Rod Drake is the head coach and he is assisted by Chad Embry, Zach Erwin, Scott Hogg, and David Phillips.

The Lexington Herald-Leader recently published an article about the Red Devils' victory. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Herald-Leader, March 22, 2015]

OWENSBORO BOYS WIN THEIR FIRST STATE BASKETBALL TITLE SINCE 1980

(By Mark Maloney)

It was a long time coming, but Owensboro finally snatched its fourth state championship Sunday.

The Red Devils led wire-to-wire in downing Bowling Green 74–58 in the finals of the 98th Whitaker Bank/KHSAA Sweet Sixteen in Rupp Arena.