

The war in Europe ended just a few weeks later on May 8, 1945. Second Lieutenant Dole came back to a Topeka hospital and eventually back to Russell. When he went to Europe, he weighed a muscular 200 pounds and was a football, basketball and track star at the State University of Kansas. When he came home after the war, he was on a stretcher and weighed 120 pounds. At one point, his temperature reached 108.7 degrees.

Faced with this terrible situation and the unanimously gloomy opinion of his doctors, many people, even most people, would have become disheartened and simply given up. But Bob Dole persevered, through more than three years of arduous recovery and through a lifetime of difficulty and hardship which he handled with this customary humor and grace. No one ever worked harder, complained less or laughed more than Bob Dole. And no one ever loved his country more or had a better appreciation of the honor and sacrifice of military service.

From the terrible trauma of his injuries, Bob Dole fought back and won elective office as county attorney, US Congressman, US Senator and Senate Majority Leader. He has been his party's nominee for Vice President and President. He even makes a pretty good VISA commercial! (Although his credit is not very good in that financial mega center—Russell.)

Also, no hero does it alone, and Janet and I also want to pay tribute to a lady of grace, charm and accomplishment who is Bob's partner, friend and wife—Elizabeth Dole. Elizabeth, thank you for your service to America.

I had the privilege of serving with Bob Dole in the legislative trenches of the U.S. Senate for 18 years. And I can tell you he remained a warrior eager to take on a new battle every day. He is and always will be an American Hero of the highest order.

Thanks to people like Bob Dole who have worked for a strong national defense, we are privileged to live in largely peaceful times where the sons of Bangor, Maine or Russell, Kansas are not being sent to fight and die on distant battlefields. The privilege of these peaceful times is made possible by the sacrifice of many thousands who have given their bodies and their lives in the cause of liberty.

We do not pause often enough to give tribute to the silent white gravestones which dot the hills of Arlington National Cemetery or give thanks to the heroes who are still among us. Today, as Secretary of Defense, it makes me extremely proud for our Department and our nation to pay tribute to a modest man of immodest talent—a person who has defined heroism and courage for millions of Americans.

The great American writer John Steinbeck once wrote that the best measure of one's time on this earth is the contribution each of us makes to the world around us. "There is," Steinbeck wrote, "no other story. A man, after he has brushed off the dust and chips of his life, will have left only the hard clean questions: Was it good or was it evil? Have I done well—or ill?"

For Second Lieutenant Bob Dole—Army Serial #17179287—Steinbeck's question is not a hard one. He has done well—he has served his nation with the highest distinction—he has remained a man with fire in his heart. And it is my highest privilege to award our highest civilian honor, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, to Bob Dole.

OREGON SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, I would like to take a brief mo-

ment to express my condolences to the families of the students killed and wounded during the tragic shooting yesterday at the Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon.

The thoughts and prayers of all Americans today are with the families of Springfield. It is yet another community where lives have been shattered forever by children with easy access to firearms.

This attack was the fourth killing in a high school in the last six months by a youth under the age of 16. Mr. President, this killing must stop.

Last year, approximately 50% of all serious violent crimes were committed by teens against teens. Our nation's overall firearm-related death rate among children was nearly 12 times higher than among children in the other 25 industrialized countries combined.

This is an outrage. Mr. President, these horrific crimes amply demonstrate that we have a responsibility to oppose the proliferation of violence and to stand fast against any effort to make firearms more freely available. Does anyone still believe that it is possible to raise children in a society where guns are so easily obtained? We cannot continue to protect our children in such a world.

We must come together as a society and recommit ourselves to keeping firearms out of the hands of children and to guaranteeing that only those people who know how to use guns responsibly have access to them. We must expand programs to train gunowners in the proper use and storage of their weapons.

Responsible gunowners have nothing to fear from reasonable gun laws. We must have reasonable gun laws that will prevent tragedies like the one that happened yesterday in that small community in Oregon from ever happening again. The second amendment was never intended as a subterfuge for domestic carnage. Our living constitution can respond to changes in our society which jeopardize our freedom from fear and random violence by children. I think it is appropriate for us to have that debate, given the importance to our children, to their safety, to our liberty and freedom and safety in our communities.

JUDGE JOE ANDERSON'S REDEDICATION OF THE EDGEFIELD COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, the very foundation of our Nation lies in the rule of law, and there is perhaps no symbol more closely associated with the process of justice than the courthouse. Not only is the courthouse where justice is dispensed, but it is a reminder to all citizens that the judiciary is the third branch of our system of government.

Recently, the Edgefield County Courthouse was rededicated, and Judge Joe Anderson, of the South Carolina

District Court, was the keynote speaker at the ceremony. His remarks were very well received by the crowd and helped to make the event a great success. Though I was unable to attend this event, I heard from a number of friends who did that Judge Anderson's remarks were truly excellent. After requesting a copy of his speech, I came to the very same conclusion and thought that my peers in the Senate would enjoy reading them as much as I did.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of this speech be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

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

Judge Keesley, Members of the County Council, other distinguished guests, and friends:

What a joy, what an honor, to have the privilege of being a part of this ceremony. I appreciate the opportunity you have given me to come home, and to show my appreciation. I promise not to afflict you with many words.

As one who spends all of my working hours in a courthouse building, I am honored to say a few brief words in rededication of this historic structure and what it has come to symbolize for our community.

Winston Churchill once said that the best measure of the quality of a society is the quality of its justice. America is distinguished from other countries by the quality of its law and how it is used by its people to expand liberty and opportunity. Our law represents our national dreams, our system of justice towards one another.

The assumptions that we make every day, the security we take for granted, the social compact that allows us to live together peacefully . . . these are the result of law. In rededicating this building we rededicate ourselves to the rule of law.

Courthouse buildings, of course, represent a symbol of permanence and the place where our laws are administered. It is here that our citizens are summoned to become actively involved in the public administration of justice—a privilege that citizens of most other countries do not enjoy. It is here that the cogs and gears of liberty function on a daily basis.

I have always thought that the rather nondescript term we use to describe these buildings—"courthouse"—does not adequately convey the importance of the work that goes on inside. The French use a more inspirational name: "Palace of Justice."

Regardless of the name by which it is called, no one can deny the role that our courthouse, our "Palace of Justice" has played in the development of our county. We are all indebted to Chairman Monroe Kneese and the members of our county council Betty Buter, Sam Speight, Daniel Bishop and Norman Dorn and County Administrator Wayne Adams for their foresight in recognizing the renovations and improvements that were needed. Their vision and hard work have brought this historic structure up to standards that will allow it to serve in the next millennium and beyond, while at the same time preserving all the charm and history that makes this building special for all of us. This ceremony is, in part, a tribute to their stewardship of one of the real crown jewels of our county. On occasions such as this, we ask God's blessing on their endeavors.

Today is one of those moments when we can pause, take a look at where we've been, where we are, and where we might be headed.

Bettis Rainsford has chronicled for you the history of the Edgefield County Courthouse. There may not be many other courthouses in America, certainly not in South Carolina, with a pedigree to match that of this building. I am certain that there is no courthouse anywhere with so many portraits of notable leaders—statesmen, generals, lawyers and judges. I distinctly remember my first visit to this courthouse with my father. The portraits on the walls left a lasting impression on me. I particularly remember my father singling out Senator STROM THURMOND, pictured on these walls when he was a young Circuit Judge, as well as his father, John William Thurmond, one of the most able lawyers our state has ever produced.

But what does all this history mean to us as we are about to embark on a new century? As South Carolinians and, especially as Edgefieldians, we have a rich heritage. We are each of us the sum total of generations of growing, yearning, of planning and failing, of building and destroying and building again.

This is an exciting time for Edgefield County. Our area is growing, our young people have a place to come back to, our schools are moving ahead, industry is recognizing the virtues of small town life and good work ethic that goes with it. Edgefield County is on the move.

This building is a monument to the hands, hearts and minds of our forebearers. Not just the dignitaries on these walls—not just the statesmen, the generals, the lawyers and the judges—but also the public servants behind the scenes, like Miss Martha Rich, the merchants, the ministers, the school teachers, the sharecroppers, the industrialists, the artists and the artisans who have gone before us to help make this corner of God's earth a special place in our hearts.

Thank you again for inviting me.

OPERATION GRADUATION WEEKEND

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, Operation Graduation is a six-state campaign devoted to the safety of high school seniors on graduation night. The campaign is designed to fund alcohol-free/drug-free graduation parties that are safe, memorable, and fun.

In an effort to encourage high schools to hold alcohol-free/drug-free graduation parties, local cable systems in the Midwest are donating money to corresponding area high schools. This project also provides high schools with information kits containing an Operation Graduation How-to-Guide, pamphlets, and brochures on the dangers of drunk driving, and other resources for promoting Operation Graduation.

Together, local cable system employees in Missouri are fighting to stop needless deaths on our roads and highways that result from reckless behavior on graduation night.

I would like to commend all the people working to make the weekend of May 29, 1998, "Operation Graduation Weekend."

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday, XAVIER BECERRA, JOSÉ E. SERRANO and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus called upon the Republican leadership to vote upon the Latino nominees to

judgeships who have languished in the Senate far too long. I welcome the views of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to the debate and I ask unanimous consent that a copy of their letter be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See Exhibit No. 1.)

Mr. LEAHY. I have spoken often, too often, about the crisis in the Second Circuit and our need for the Senate to move forward to confirm the nominees pending on the Senate calendar to that important court.

Judge Sonia Sotomayor is a qualified nominee who was confirmed to the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York in 1992 after being nominated by President Bush. She attended Princeton University and Yale Law School. She worked for over four years in the New York District Attorney's Office as an Assistant District Attorney and was in private practice with Pavia & Harcourt in New York. She is strongly supported by Senator MOYNIHAN and Senator D'AMATO. She is a source of pride to Puerto Rican and other Hispanic supporters and to women. When confirmed she will be only the second woman and second judge of Puerto Rican descent to serve on the Second Circuit.

By a vote of 16 to 2, the Judiciary Committee reported the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Senate. That was on March 5, 1998, over two months ago. No action has been taken or scheduled on that nomination and no explanation for the delay has been forthcoming. This is the oldest judicial nomination pending on the Senate Executive Calendar. In spite of an April 8 letter to the Senate Republican Leader signed by all six Senators from the three States forming the Second Circuit urging prompt action, this nomination continues to be stalled by anonymous objections. Our bipartisan letter to the Majority Leader asked that he call up for prompt consideration by the Senate of the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor. That was over one month ago. I request unanimous consent that a copy of that letter be included in the record at the conclusion of my remarks.

Nor is Judge Sotomayor the only woman or minority judicial nominee who has been needlessly delayed. Indeed, if one considers those nominees who have taken the longest to confirm this year, we find a disturbing pattern.

Hilda Tagle, the only Hispanic woman the Senate has confirmed this year, took 32 months to be confirmed as a District Court Judge for the Southern District of Texas—that was over two and one-half years. As I have noted, Judge Sotomayor's nomination to the Second Circuit is the longest pending on the Senate calendar, another qualified Hispanic woman nominee. Judge Richard Paez, currently a District Court Judge and a nominee to the Ninth Circuit, was first nominated

in January 1996. Twenty-eight months later, Judge Paez's nomination remains pending on the Senate calendar. Nor have we seen any progress with respect to the nomination of Jorge Rangel to the Fifth Circuit or Anabelle Rodriguez to the District Court for Puerto Rico, although her nomination was received in January 1996 almost 28 months ago.

For that matter, we have seen the President's nomination of the Judge James A. Beaty, Jr., the first African-American to the Fourth Circuit stalled for 29 months, since December 1995.

We have seen the attack on Judge Frederica Massiah-Jackson, who would have been the first African-American woman to serve on the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, but who was forced to withdraw. We have seen the nomination of Clarence Sundram held up since September 1995, almost 32 months.

With the delays in the Senate consideration of Margaret Morrow and Margaret McKeown earlier this year, we had the opportunity to consider why it is that the Senate takes so much longer to consider and confirm so many woman nominees. That question has yet to be answered adequately.

Margaret Morrow was targeted by some and debate on her nomination was delayed for more than a year. She was first nominated in May 1996 and was not voted on for 21 months. When we finally got a vote, she was confirmed by a vote of more than two to one. Margaret Morrow was the first and only woman to serve as the President of the California State Bar. The ABA gave her its highest rating. She had strong bipartisan support. She was held up for a judicial emergency vacancy for many months without cause of justification.

Nor was Margaret Morrow an isolated case. Consider the nomination of Judge Ann Aiken to the District Court in Oregon. That nomination was received in November 1995 but not considered by the Senate until January 1998, 26 months later. She, too, was confirmed by a vote of more than two to one.

Then we had the case of Margaret McKeown who was nominated to a vacancy on the Ninth Circuit in March 1996 but not considered until two years later in March 1998. When she received a Senate vote, she was confirmed by a vote of 80 to 11.

We still have Susan Oki Mollway pending before the Senate without a vote although she was first nominated back in December 1995 for the vacancy on the District Court in Hawaii—that was more than 29 months ago and still she is without a vote.

In his annual report on the judiciary last year, the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court observed: "Some current nominees have been waiting a considerable time for a Senate Judiciary Committee vote or a final floor vote. The Senate confirmed only 17 judges in 1996 and 36 in 1997, well under the 101 judges it confirmed