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[Page S5869-S5870]

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ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HAROLD KELLER PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP AWARD

<bullet> Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, each year many of America's best and brightest high school students come together to compete in the John C. Stennis National Student Congress. For nearly 30 years Harold Keller has been the driving force behind this event, which has provided thousands of young people an opportunity to develop leadership skills and learn about Congress.

Harold Keller is known as ``Mr. Congress'' within the National Forensic League, which encompasses the National Student Congress as part of its comprehensive national speech and debate program. Each year he has worked tirelessly to make the week-long competition run smoothly and fairly. But perhaps more importantly, he has also made time to provide personal encouragement and guidance to many of those who take part.

It is this commitment and compassion that has made him not only an integral part of the National Student Congress but also a memorable force in the lives of many students who have participated through the years.

In addition to his leadership of the Student Congress, Harold Keller is a tireless champion of speech and debate education throughout the Nation. He has spent many weekends away from home conducting local and district tournaments and seminars. Despite retiring as a speech and debate teacher at West High School in Davenport, IA, in 2003, Mr. Keller continues his service on the Executive Council of the National Forensic League and continues to provide leadership and inspiration not only to students, but also to teachers and coaches who view him as a mentor. It was in recognition for his lifelong efforts that the National Forensic League inducted him into its Hall of Fame.

Mr. Keller has faithfully lived his life by the philosophy expressed on a poster which hangs in his office quoting the words of Forest

Witcraft:

A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank
account was,
The sort of house I lived in or what kind of car I drove.
But the world may be different because I was important in the
life of a child.

When the 2006 John C. Stennis National Student Congress convenes in Grapevine, TX, June 18-23, with over 420 competitors from throughout the United States, the Stennis Center for Public Service, which sponsors the event, will honor Harold Keller by establishing the Harold Keller Public Service Leadership Award. Beginning next year, the Keller Award will be presented annually to a former Student Congress competitor who has made significant contributions to his or her community, State, or Nation through public service leadership. The Harold

[[Page S5870]]

Keller Award will recognize individuals who have best applied the lessons learned through participation in the Student Congress to become outstanding leaders in public service.

There is perhaps no better way to recognize and honor Mr. Keller's commitment and leadership than through this award. Each year, the winner will return to the National Student Congress to serve as a role model and inspiration to the newest class of participants.

In recognition of the establishment of this award and of Mr. Keller's many years of selfless leadership, the Stennis Center will present him with a replica of the small, handleless gavel which sits on the rostrum of this Chamber today. This gavel, a very significant symbol of the Senate, was used by Vice President John Adams to call the first Senate to order in 1789 in New York and has, according to tradition, rested on the rostrum of the Senate during its meetings since then. The replica of the original ivory gavel is sculpted from marble that was once part of the Capitol.

It is hoped that Harold Keller will receive the replica of this historic Senate gavel as a symbol of our gratitude for his patriotism and tireless leadership in providing opportunities for young men and women to prepare for public service. Ultimately, however, the greatest reward for him, and for our Nation, must be the quality and character of the leadership that will come from those who benefited from his hard work, teaching, and guidance.

We pay tribute to Harold Keller for the wonderful leadership opportunities he has provided over the past three decades for American

youth participating in the John C. Stennis National Student Congress,
and congratulate him on the well deserved honor of having a national
award for public service leadership established in his name.<bullet>
