



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC

GREETING FROM JOE MANCHIN III UNITED STATES SENATOR

It is my distinct honor to welcome those attending the 6th Anniversary of Gene Vance, Jr. Day.

Let us never forget the sacrifices made by the noble men and women who have come before us, the individuals who have served our nation so bravely. I sincerely appreciate our Veterans and their family members in attendance today for the sacrifices they have made to preserve the freedoms we hold dear. Today's lovely ceremony shows that our entire nation grieves at the loss of a service member, and that their service is truly never forgotten.

Sgt. Vance had served our nation honorably when his life was tragically cut short on May 18, 2002 in the mountains of Afghanistan. His training with the U.S. Special Forces and his expertise as a skilled linguist saved the lives of two of his fellow American soldiers, along with 18 Afghani soldiers during Operation Enduring Freedom. The sudden loss of any one life is one life too many. When those lives are lost in battle, fighting for their nation, it is with great appreciation that they are memorialized as daily reminders of the brave men and women who loved our country so dearly. Sgt. Gene Arden Vance Jr. was such a man, and I proudly join each of you paying tribute to his legacy, and that of all the heroes of the Global War on Terror.

Additionally, this ceremony marks the beginning of a year-long tribute and benefit with the mission to construct the world's first monument for the catastrophically injured – a statue of Gene Arden Vance, Jr. dedicated to the people of West Virginia and our Service Members at home and abroad. This memorial will be a symbol of courage, hope and honor, representing the enduring spirit of our great nation and the mutual desire across the world for liberty and justice for all.

Again, I appreciate the efforts of the West Virginia National Guard, the City of Morgantown, the Gene Vance Jr. Foundation for the Catastrophically Injured, and all those who contributed to making this special event possible to honor and support our service members.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III".

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator