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Good morning.

It is a privilege for me to have a chance to speak here today—because I am representing an institution that owes Mary Anderson a great deal, and I am speaking for the many colleagues who remember her with great affection. The institution, of course, is the RAND Corporation.

Mary spent most of her career at RAND, but not all of it. Mary—Mary Rice—grew up and went to high school in Saginaw, Michigan, graduating fifth in her class of 600. She then got two degrees in geography, first from Valparaiso University in Indiana and then her Master’s Degree from the University of Michigan. She then went to work, first with the U.S. Army and then with the CIA, where she spent three years as a research analyst.

In 1956, she moved to California and began her first tour at RAND. That tour only lasted 18 months, because RAND was in the process of spinning off its Systems Development Division and Mary spun off with it. She was away for nearly four years, and when she came back in 1961, as Mary Anderson, she came back for good.

Rather than tell the RAND story in chronological order, I want to start with the long middle period of her RAND career. That’s when Mary played a crucial role in what was then a grand experiment that fundamentally changed RAND—dramatically and for the good. I am referring to the decision to diversify our research portfolio and use our expertise to tackle the most important social problems of the day: health care, education, housing, crime, poverty, and more. That experiment was controversial, it was risky, but it was in the end successful. Within a decade, RAND had the largest and most influential program of research on domestic policy problems in the nation. And we still do.

The work of the Domestic Research Division:

- Changed the way that decisionmakers thought about social problems and looked for solutions,
- Revolutionized the way that the research community studied social problems, and, as a result, the work of RAND improved the lives of millions of people.

An endeavor that big and bold inevitably has many heroes. Sadly, I have eulogized two, Al Williams in 2000 and Gus Shubert just a year ago. In a few minutes, we’ll hear from a third, perfectly healthy, my friend, David Lyon. There is no doubt that on that list of heroes belongs Mary Anderson.

RAND’s success in the domestic-policy arena resulted from the brilliance of our principal investigators and our institutional ability to pull off their audacious study plans, at least most of the time. For many years, that institutional ability was named Mary Anderson. Mary ran our domestic division’s operations office and served as associate head of the health program. In those roles, she orchestrated the submission of hundreds of proposals by dozens of researchers to countless agencies and foundations each year, and at the same time she helped keep hundreds of projects and publications on track. But that’s not all. She designed our first course for project managers (largely to reduce her own burden of having to rescue projects that went off the rails). She was one of the earliest architects of RAND’s system for protecting the rights of the human subjects we studied, many years before those protections were required by law.
Mary was, in short, a dazzling operations manager, one of the best we’ve ever had. That’s not how she started out at RAND, however.

She spent most of her early years as a researcher on a pathbreaking study commonly referred to as the Motivation and Morale Study, a multi-year, multi-disciplinary examination of the organization, operations, motivations, and morale of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army. The study team, including Mary, conducted 2,400 interviews with Vietnamese and produced dozens of reports and briefings. Mary led the analysis of the Viet Cong’s operations in Dinh Tuong Province, which came to be known as “hell in a small place” because of the intensity of the relentless B-52 bombing raids there.

When the reports were declassified in the 1970s, Mary’s included, each contained the following words in the Foreword: “It should be pointed out that there was substantive disagreement among the RAND researchers involved in Vietnam research at the time, and contrary points of view with totally different implications for U.S. operations can be found in the reports. This internal debate mirrored the debate that was then current throughout the country.” Mary held her own in that rough-and-tumble environment, and it prepared her well for her role later on.

I didn’t work directly with Mary at first. While David and Mary were in charge of the Domestic Research Division, I was in charge of the National Security Research Division. So when I dealt with Mary, it was generally because of some conflict between the two divisions. When we met it was usually to resolve some kind of disagreement. She was formidable. I took comfort in the fact that a lot of other people were also a little bit afraid of her. She was always direct, of course, and some people thought she was “gruff.” But for me, it was never what she said that was so powerful. What I remember is that she had an uncanny way of listening to your side of an issue and then pausing. She would just look at you. No sound. Just looking at you. Complete silence. One look said, “you cannot be serious” and another said “you have got to be kidding.” . . . I don’t recall prevailing on many of those issues. Actually, I don’t recall prevailing on any of them.

So—I eventually hired Mary Anderson to work for my division. In the late 1980s, the Pentagon decided to introduce managed care to the civilian health and medical program that it ran for military retirees and families. The so-called CHAMPUS Reform Initiative fundamentally changed the military health system, so the Congress wisely requested a demonstration to test the initiative’s feasibility before expanding it. The Congress also wisely mandated an independent evaluation. Sue Hosek led a RAND team that won the evaluation contract. Our elation turned quickly to panic when we realized that we were now going to have to actually master the intricacies of how military hospitals operate. Al Williams said only one person at RAND could do that and her name was Mary Anderson. He was correct and that is what she did.

So, she started her career as a researcher and she returned to research at the end. But her lasting legacy is the role she played in the growth and success of RAND’s Domestic Research Division. That important work still flourishes, thanks originally to Shubert and Anderson, Williams and Anderson, Lyon and Anderson.

You see the pattern, which is why all of us who work at RAND today owe Mary Anderson a tremendous debt. Those of us who knew her, who worked with her, who admired her: We all feel a deep loss. But, she has left behind many good memories to sustain us. May she now rest in peace.