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TRIBUTES TO HON. ROBERT C. BYRD

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Robert C. Byrd

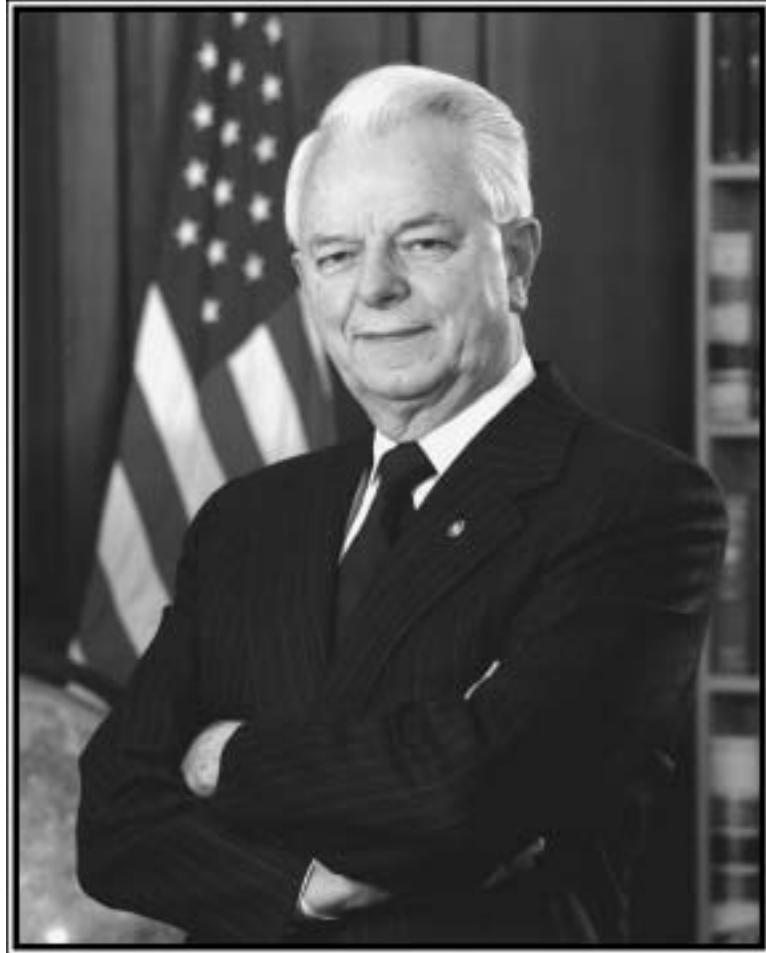
U.S. SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA

TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF
THE UNITED STATES



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Robert C. Byrd

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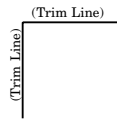
S. Doc. 109–15

Tributes
Delivered in Congress

Robert C. Byrd
United States Congressman
1953–1958

United States Senator
1959–





*Compiled under the direction
of the
Joint Committee on Printing
Trent Lott, Chairman*

CONTENTS

	Page
Biography	v
Proceedings in the Senate:	
Tributes by Senators:	
Akaka, Daniel K., of Hawaii	74
Alexander, Lamar, of Tennessee	36
Baucus, Max, of Montana	64
Biden, Joseph R., Jr., of Delaware	75
Boxer, Barbara, of California	59
Chambliss, Saxby, of Georgia	38
Clinton, Hillary Rodham, of New York	48
Coburn, Tom, of Oklahoma	51
Cochran, Thad, of Mississippi	75
Coleman, Norm, of Minnesota	76
Dodd, Christopher J., of Connecticut	65
Domenici, Pete V., of New Mexico	34
Durbin, Richard, of Illinois	20
Enzi, Michael B., Wyoming	79
Frist, William H., of Tennessee	3
Harkin, Tom, of Iowa	68
Hatch, Orrin G., of Utah	45
Isakson, Johnny, of Georgia	41
Johnson, Tim, of South Dakota	46
Kennedy, Edward M., of Massachusetts	30
Kohl, Herb, of Wisconsin	58
Landrieu, Mary L., of Louisiana	69
Lautenberg, Frank R., of New Jersey	54
Leahy, Patrick J., of Vermont	81
Levin, Carl, of Michigan	39
Lieberman, Joseph I., of Connecticut	62
Martinez, Mel, of Florida	78
McConnell, Mitch, of Kentucky	9, 71
Mikulski, Barbara A., of Maryland	47
Murray, Patty, of Washington	57
Nelson, Bill, of Florida	53
Obama, Barak, of Illinois	60
Reed, Jack, of Rhode Island	51
Reid, Harry, of Nevada	4
Rockefeller, John D., IV, of West Virginia	43
Salazar, Ken, of Colorado	18
Sarbanes, Paul S., of Maryland	71
Smith, Gordon H., of Oregon	51
Specter, Arlen, of Pennsylvania	15
Stevens, Ted, of Alaska	13
Warner, John, of Virginia	25, 39

(Trim Line)
(Trim Line)

	Page
Proceedings in the House of Representatives:	
Tributes by Representatives:	
Mollohan, Alan B., of West Virginia	83
Rahall, Nick J., II, of West Virginia	83

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Biography

ROBERT C. BYRD's story is a classic American saga of hard work, success, and achievement.

Born in 1917 in North Wilkesboro, NC, ROBERT BYRD was left a virtual orphan by the death of his mother when he was only 1 year old. Brought to West Virginia by his aunt and uncle to be reared as their own, the future Senator grew up in various communities in the bituminous coalfields, mastering life's early lessons and graduating as valedictorian of his high school class in the depths of the Great Depression in the 1930s.

Unable at the time to afford college tuition, BYRD sought employment wherever he found an opportunity—pumping gas at a filling station, working as a produce salesman, and then becoming a meat cutter—picking up new skills as he advanced.

One of those skills—welding—was in demand after World War II started, and he worked during the war years building Liberty and Victory ships in the construction yards of Baltimore, MD, and Tampa, FL.

At war's end, he returned to West Virginia with a new vision of what his home State and his country could be. In 1946, he made his first run for political office, and was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates.

After two terms in the West Virginia House of Delegates, BYRD was elected to the West Virginia Senate; then to the U.S. House of Representatives for three terms; and finally, in 1958, to the U.S. Senate, where he has represented West Virginia continuously since, winning reelection again and again by record margins in statewide elections. He has served longer in the U.S. Senate than has anyone else in West Virginia's history, an indication of the confidence, faith, and trust that the people of his home State have regarding him. In fact, in the history of the Republic, only two other Members of Congress have had a longer tenure than Senator BYRD's congressional career of more than 50 years.

In addition to fulfilling his Senate responsibilities, he earned his law degree (J.D.), cum laude, from American University in Washington, DC, in 1963 after 10 years of study

in night classes. This marked the first time in history that a sitting Member of either House of the Congress has accomplished the feat of beginning and completing the courses of study leading to a law degree while serving in Congress. BYRD was awarded his bachelor of arts degree in political science, summa cum laude, by Marshall University in 1994, at the age of 77.

Continuing his upward trajectory, Senator BYRD became a member of the Senate leadership in 1967, when he was selected by his colleagues to be secretary of the Democratic Conference. In 1971, he was chosen Senate Democratic whip. In 1977, he was elected Democratic leader by his Democratic colleagues, a position he held for six consecutive terms. For the 12 years he held the position of Democratic leader—from January 1977 through December 1988—Senator BYRD served as Senate majority leader 6 years (1977–1980, 1987–1988) and as Senate minority leader 6 years (1981–1986).

On two different occasions, Senator BYRD has served as chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee, on which he has held membership since January 1959. Also twice, Senator BYRD unanimously was elected President pro tempore of the Senate, a post that placed him third in line of succession to the Presidency. He was President pro tempore from 1989 through 1994, and again from June 2001 through the end of 2002.

ROBERT BYRD has the distinction of having held more leadership positions in the U.S. Senate than any other Senator of any party in Senate history and, on June 12, 2006, became the longest serving Senator in the history of the Republic.

In May 2001, Senator BYRD received what he considers his greatest honor when Governor Bob Wise and both Houses of the West Virginia Legislature named him “West Virginian of the 20th Century.” In 2006, West Virginia voters elected Senator BYRD to an unprecedented ninth 6-year term in the U.S. Senate. He also has cast more votes than any other Senator in the history of the Republic, having cast more than 17,700 votes.

Senator BYRD was married for more than 68 years to the former Erma Ora James, his high school sweetheart and a coal miner’s daughter. Mrs. Byrd died on March 25, 2006, after battling a long illness. The couple has two daughters, Mrs. Mohammad (Mona Byrd) Fatemi and Mrs. Jon (Marjorie Byrd) Moore. They have six grandchildren—Erik, Darius, and Fredrik Fatemi; Michael (deceased), Mona Byrd Moore Pearson, and Mary Anne Moore Clarkson—and six

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great-grandchildren: Caroline Byrd Fatemi; Kathryn James Fatemi, and Anna Cristina Honora Fatemi; Emma James Clarkson and Hannah Byrd Clarkson; and Michael Yoo Fatemi.

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TRIBUTES
TO
ROBERT C. BYRD

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Proceedings in the Senate

MONDAY, *June 12, 2006*

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today marks an extraordinary—extraordinary—milestone in the history of the Senate and in the life of one of our most distinguished colleagues.

Today, ROBERT C. BYRD, the senior Senator from West Virginia, becomes the longest serving Senator in the history of the United States.

Today, he will have served 17,327 days in office, and outlasted 1,885 Senators who have graced this Chamber since 1789. He has cast more votes than any other Senator. And this year, Senator BYRD is running for an unprecedented ninth term.

Our distinguished colleague has amassed an astonishing record of service, and it is my privilege and honor to pay tribute to the Dean of the Senate—one of the greatest orators in the grand tradition of this august institution.

Senator BYRD won his first election to the Senate back in 1958. Lyndon Johnson was the majority leader. Dwight Eisenhower was President. And the Soviets had won the space race with the launch of Sputnik.

Senator BYRD joined the Appropriations Committee and quickly got to work learning the ins and outs of parliamentary procedure.

Senator BYRD has been called a walking encyclopedia of Congress. Indeed, in his career he has authored a four-volume history of the U.S. Senate.

In 1971, Senator BYRD was chosen Senate Democratic whip. In 1977, he was elected Democratic leader, a position held for six consecutive terms.

He led the Senate as majority leader for 6 years, and served as minority leader for another 6.

Senator BYRD has twice been elected President pro tempore.

All told, ROBERT C. BYRD has held more leadership positions in the Senate than any other Senator in history.

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But even having attained this extraordinary influence, Senator BYRD has never forgotten where he came from or who sent him here.

From early on in his career, he demonstrated his deep commitment to the people of West Virginia. His loyalty, closeness, and respect have been rewarded. Senator BYRD has won overwhelming majorities in each of his reelection campaigns, winning with 78 percent in 2000.

He is known across his State for his unflagging support for his constituents and the future and welfare of those people of West Virginia. In 2001, he was named by his State "West Virginian of the 20th Century."

Today marks a great achievement for the senior Senator, but in some ways it is also bittersweet.

Today, Erma Byrd, the Senator's wife of nearly seven decades, would have turned 89 years old. The Senator has said that his love for Erma was greater than anything in his life. Without her, he could not have reached such great heights, nor could he have endured the inevitable rough patches of political life.

On the occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary, the Senator paid an eloquent tribute to his high school sweetheart. His words:

Erma and I are complete and whole, a total that is more than the sum of its parts. In my life, Erma Byrd is the diamond. She is the priceless treasure, a multifaceted woman of great insight and wisdom, of quiet humor and common sense.

Senator BYRD has said that, for him, today's achievement will pass with little fanfare or pride. Today, he will do what he has always done on June 12. He will honor his dear wife Erma, remember her and pray for her.

So we will celebrate on his behalf and pay honor to them both—Senator BYRD for his lifelong service to his country, and Erma for her quiet and steady support for the country gentleman from West Virginia.

When history is written, I am certain that Senator BYRD will hold a prominent place as a Senate legend—and in no small part because of the love of a kind and gentle lady, Erma Ora Byrd.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is Monday. The galleries do not have many people in them. We have a new batch of pages. Others graduated recently. But everyone here—pages

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and those in the gallery—should recognize that today is a day of history in America.

Public service is about personal sacrifice for the greater good. It is about reaching for the better angels of our human nature.

That quote is a great quote for today. That quote is from ROBERT BYRD, which should come as no surprise because the description fits him to a tee.

As we have heard from the distinguished majority leader, Senator BYRD passes Strom Thurmond, who I had the good fortune to serve with, and becomes the longest serving Senator in American history, with 17,327 days—17,327 days—of service in the Senate.

You add that to his 6 years in the House of Representatives, and ROBERT BYRD has served in the Congress 25 percent of the time we have been a Nation. Seventy-five percent of the time other people served in the Congress. But this one man has served 25 percent of the time we have been a country. This gives us some perspective of what a significant day this actually is. The U.S. Senate first met in New York City in 1789.

ROBERT C. BYRD has served a distinguished career. His career in the Senate is significant, important, and impressive. But his life is impressive.

America is a place where everyone has a chance. It does not matter that you are an orphan at age 1. It does not matter that you are raised with an aunt and uncle. It does not matter that your new parents work very, very hard in the coal mines of West Virginia. Because, you see, in America people can succeed no matter what the status of their parents.

ROBERT BYRD is testimony to that. He graduated valedictorian of his high school class. He went to work in the depths of the Great Depression because he had no way of paying to go to college. He worked at a number of different jobs. He worked odd jobs wherever he could find them, pumping gas, selling produce, working as a meat cutter, a butcher, and even during World War II doing some welding on Liberty and Victory ships.

After the war, he returned to West Virginia and began his distinguished career of public service.

The West Virginia House of Delegates was his first elected position. Then he was elected to the West Virginia Senate. Then he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in the early 1950s. In 1958, he was elected to the U.S. Senate.

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His career of leadership is unsurpassed and will always be unsurpassed. He has been a mentor to me for all these many years and a leader for whom all of us in this body have the highest respect.

But as we have already heard, for all of his accolades—and there have been many—Senator BYRD himself will tell you his greatest success truly came on a late day in May 1937, when he put on his best suit, traveled to the nearby town of Sophia, WV, and married his high school sweetheart, Erma. Today is her birthday.

Now, I had the good fortune to travel, on a couple of occasions, with Erma Byrd and the Senator. We had work to do around the world. What a wonderful, wonderful woman. She was kind, thoughtful, and quiet, but with a great presence about her. I remember having the honor, really—and it was that—of Senator BYRD asking me to go to West Virginia. We had a parliamentary exchange with the British Parliament.

I had heard this song, “West Virginia Hills,” but it never meant anything to me until that occasion in a mesa in West Virginia where we gathered with those British parliamentarians for an evening event to listen to some bluegrass music, to watch the Sun go down in those West Virginia hills. That is something I will always remember of ROBERT BYRD and his lovely wife Erma.

There has been no greater advocate in the almost 18,000 days this man has served in the Senate, and the more than 18,000 days he has served in the Congress, no greater advocate for the State of West Virginia than Senator ROBERT BYRD.

He has fought to improve access to education and health care. The things he has done for transportation in West Virginia are legendary. He has brought jobs there. He has done things to protect pensioners.

We just passed on May 24 an example of what Senator BYRD does for West Virginia. The Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006 was passed on May 24. President Bush will sign this into law. Again, it is important legislation for miners across the country. It means a lot to me. I have spoken to Senator BYRD about miners. My father was a miner. And I am proud of the work Senator BYRD has done for West Virginia because it helps all miners.

I asked, as I was coming here, my long-serving personal assistant Janice Shelton: What do you want me to say about Senator BYRD? She has worked with me all the time I have been in the Senate.

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She said: No Senator comes and talks to the country like Senator BYRD.

The Fourth of July you prepare your own speech; you read your own speech about the Fourth of July. Thanksgiving, if we are here, you give a speech on Thanksgiving. Christmas, Mother's Day, wonderful—I can still remember your speeches on Mother's Day. The reason those speeches are so important to every one of us—of course, they are important to you; they reflect upon your mother, the woman who raised you—is because it causes us to reflect on our own mothers. Every time you gave one of those speeches, I thought of my red-haired mother working so hard, taking in wash so that I could have clothes like the other kids. So every speech you give is not only for the people of West Virginia. It is for the country. It is for the people who work here with you.

I have had the good fortune—in fact, I visited with one of my friends who I practiced law with for 12 years. A brilliant man, he is so smart. He reads books, has from the time he was a boy until now, many books each week. I have always admired Rex Jemison and how smart he is. But Senator BYRD, to those of us who have worked with you, you have no peer.

I can remember as if it were yesterday when you decided you were going to take over the Appropriations Committee and no longer have a leadership position. We had an event in the Russell Building, the caucus room. There was no press, Senators, very limited staff. You stood and talked to us a little bit. You told us things we thought we always knew, and I have retold this story so many times. I am going to retell it again. You told us you could get in your car in Virginia, drive to West Virginia and back—and it takes about 8 hours—reciting poetry over and back without stopping and never recite the same poem twice. Think about that. Calculate it for a minute. How many people have read the Encyclopedia Britannica from cover to cover? Senator ROBERT BYRD. How many people have sat down when we have a break and read the dictionary? This man has done this. How many people can recite poetry as he did? I have just talked about this. How many people can recite Shakespeare verse after verse, passages out of Scripture?

Senator BYRD gave a series of speeches here, 10 speeches, each lasting for 1 hour. The subject was the line-item veto was going to ruin the Senate. The comparison was to the Roman Empire, the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. Senator BYRD gave 10 speeches. When I was not able to listen

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personally, I listened to the recording. So tremendous were those speeches that the head of the political science department at UNV-LV, Dr. Randy Tuttle, taught a course on ROBERT BYRD based on these 10 speeches.

I asked Senator BYRD: You gave those speeches, you quit right on time, you had an hour set aside. How did you know when to stop?

He said: It was easy. I memorized all 10 of them.

When we met with the British parliamentarians, as I just recounted, in West Virginia, the bluegrass music stopped, and Senator BYRD had staff pass out a little tablet and pencil to everybody. He said: If I make a mistake, write it down. And he proceeded to give us a demonstration of memory that I have never seen before, starting with the first ruler in Great Britain, the years the person served, the name, how to spell it, and very briefly what was accomplished during that period of time, from the beginning to the present Queen Elizabeth. Those parliamentarians were dumbfounded. How could an American do something they had never even thought about without a note?

There are some professors, I am sure, who are experts on ancient Rome, but I would tell all those academics, they don't have anything on the Senator from West Virginia as far as knowledge of the Roman Empire.

I consider myself so fortunate to have been able to serve in the Senate with ROBERT BYRD. And not only serve in the Senate with ROBERT BYRD, but all the time I have been here, I had the good fortune of serving on his Appropriations Committee.

The great Senator Daniel Webster said that ours:

... is a Senate of equals, of men of individual honor and personal character, and of absolute independence. We know no masters, we acknowledge no dictators. This is a hall for mutual consultation and discussion; not an arena for the exhibition of champions.

The prayer that was uttered today by Reverend Black, our Chaplain, says exactly what Daniel Webster said. That was a wonderful prayer, tremendously well done for this occasion. But I would say in response to the great Daniel Webster, there are champions among us. There are giants as well. I have served in public office a long time, but no one can dispute the fact, as far as I am concerned, that ROBERT BYRD is a giant.

I want him to know how much I appreciate all he has done for me. I care a great deal about this man. I love ROBERT

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BYRD. I love ROBERT BYRD. He is a person who sets a standard for all of us.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Thomas). Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 3 p.m., with each Senator permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to pay tribute to our distinguished colleague from West Virginia who, as the majority leader and the Democratic leader pointed out, celebrates today truly a momentous occasion, becoming the longest serving U.S. Senator in the history of our country.

Senator BYRD's record and achievements have been covered by the majority leader and the Democratic leader. I would like to make a few different observations.

When Senator BYRD came to this body in 1959, he was a member of a very large Democratic class. His party had had a very good day. It was the second term of President Eisenhower. In his class were such people as Eugene McCarthy and Tom Dodd and Phil Hart. Lyndon Baines Johnson was the leader of his party in the Senate at the time. In fact, Senator BYRD was accompanied to the well on his first day in office not by the senior Senator from his State, as is tradition, but by Majority Leader Johnson, his future mentor.

Shortly before the distinguished Senator from West Virginia got here, Majority Leader Johnson had appointed a committee to pick out the five greatest U.S. Senators in history. John F. Kennedy was appointed to be the head of that committee. After due deliberation, they picked out five Senators: Henry Clay from my State of Kentucky, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, Robert La Follette, and Robert Taft. Those five Senators, who were designated as the five greatest Senators of all time, are depicted out here off the Senate Chamber in the waiting room.

Six or 8 years ago, we decided to consider adding two more to the list. I had the opportunity to be on a committee that reviewed the possibility of adding two more. We concluded there were two more who should be added, one Democrat and one Republican.

Our colleagues on the Democratic side picked Robert Wagner of New York, who was the author of most of President Roosevelt's New Deal legislation. After due deliberation, the Republicans on the committee, of which I was one, concluded

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that Arthur Vandenberg was the appropriate selection for us, based upon his willingness in the late 1940s to make the Truman containment policy, the Marshall plan, and other initiatives at the beginning of the cold war that basically set out the strategy that we followed until the Berlin Wall came down in 1989. So two more Senators were added—Arthur Vandenberg and Robert Wagner.

Today I think it is safe to predict that some day in the future, some Senate will decide to revisit the issue of what other great Senators might be added to this pantheon off the Senate floor that now includes seven U.S. Senators in our history. I think I can confidently predict that near the top of the list, if not at the top of the list, some day down the road will be the distinguished Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. President, today, June 12, 2006, is our good friend from West Virginia's 17,327th day in the Senate, making him the longest serving Senator ever.

Senator ROBERT C. BYRD's first day as a Senator was January 3, 1959, when he was 41 years old. He is the 1,579th Senator. Some of his contemporaries were John Sherman Cooper, Hubert Humphrey, Everett Dirksen, John F. Kennedy, and Richard Russell.

Over his nearly 50 years of service here—he has been elected to eight full terms—Senator BYRD has served with 405 Senators, out of a total of 1,885 Senators who ever served. That is 21½ percent of the total number. Over one-fifth of all Senators who ever served can say they served with Senator BYRD.

And I add that Senator BYRD is only the second Senator ever to be elected to eight full terms.

As the Senators from two coal-producing States, Senator BYRD and I have worked together on a number of issues over the years to ensure that coal remains a safe, cheap, and plentiful source of energy, and that coal miners and their families can continue in this industry. Together we ensured that the Capitol complex would continue to be heated by coal. And we work together as members of the Appropriations Committee. I thank the Senator for his friendship over the years.

As astounding as the Senator from West Virginia's service in this body is, I must point out that he has even more experience representing the people of West Virginia. Senator BYRD served in the West Virginia House of Delegates from 1947 to 1950, the West Virginia Senate from 1951 to 1952,

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and the U.S. House of Representatives from 1953 to 1959. He was elected to his first office in 1946.

He was also elected assistant majority whip here in the Senate in 1965. In 1971, he was elected majority whip. I have heard that can be a tough job.

In 1977, Senator BYRD succeeded Senator Mike Mansfield as majority leader. He has also served as minority leader and Senate President pro tempore, meaning he has held every major position in the Senate.

After serving as majority and minority leader, Senator BYRD became chairman of the Appropriations Committee in 1989, and has been chairman or ranking member ever since. Our colleague from Alaska, the current Senate President pro tempore, has served with him on that committee since 1973.

Senator BYRD set the record for number of Senate votes cast at 12,134 on April 27, 1990, breaking a record set by Senator William Proxmire. He cast his 17,000th vote in March 2004, and continues to set the record every time he votes. As of the opening of the Senate today, he has cast 17,666 votes.

As his constituents in West Virginia know so well, Senator BYRD is the son of a coal miner. Before government service, he worked as a welder in wartime shipyards and as a meat-cutter in a coal company town.

Senator BYRD is also an expert on Senate history. He wrote, with the assistance of Senate historian Richard Baker, a four-volume collection of history, speeches and statistics titled "The Senate 1789-1989." He also wrote a history called "The Senate of the Roman Republic," and a 2005 autobiography titled "Child of the Appalachian Coalfields."

And my good friend from West Virginia is an accomplished fiddle player as well. He has performed on the television variety show "Hee Haw," at the Grand Ole Opry, and at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He even recorded an album called "Mountain Fiddler."

Senator BYRD earned his law degree from American University in 1963, while serving in the Senate. He attended night school while doing a full day's work here. President Kennedy presented him with his diploma and gave the commencement address.

President Kennedy received an honorary degree from American University at the ceremony. So he began his commencement address with these words:

President Anderson, members of the faculty, Board of Trustees, distinguished guests, my old colleague Senator BOB BYRD, who has earned his de-

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gree through many years of attending night law school while I am earning mine in the next thirty minutes, ladies and gentlemen . . .

In 1994, Senator BYRD was awarded his B.A. summa cum laude by Marshall University, which he had attended for one semester in 1951. He had earned A's in all his classes, but could not afford to continue. So he actually received his law degree before his bachelor's.

Senator BYRD is the first West Virginian in history to win all 55 of that State's counties in a statewide race. I am sure many of his fellow West Virginians know of his knowledge and reverence for the Constitution, and that he always carries a copy in his left breast pocket.

Senator BYRD's legacy in this body is felt every day. Martin Gold, author of "Senate Procedure and Practice," wrote:

Senator ROBERT BYRD (D-WV) is a giant in the field of parliamentary history and law. No Senator has had a greater impact on Senate rules and precedents.

And Michael Barone, in "The Almanac of American Politics," said this of Senator BYRD:

ROBERT BYRD, the senior member of the United States Senate, may come closer to the kind of senator the Founding Fathers had in mind than any other.

Now, these comments from scholars are certainly to be respected. But I think Senator BYRD said it best at a spirited rally near the end of one of his recent campaigns for office. Senator BYRD said:

West Virginia has always had four friends: God Almighty, Sears Roebuck, Carter's Liver Pills and ROBERT C. BYRD.

Mr. President, Senator BYRD would be the first to tell us he could not have accomplished all he has without the love of his life, his partner, and his best friend—his wife, Erma Ora James Byrd. Erma passed away this March, 2 months shy of what would have been their 69th wedding anniversary.

The daughter of a coal miner, today would have been her 89th birthday. I am sure she is watching down on us from Heaven today as we honor her husband, the Senator from West Virginia.

Stories of enduring love are part of the history of any nation. ROBERT and Erma were made for each other, and were together for nearly 69 years. Mr. President, I believe they are one of our Nation's great love stories.

I say to my friend and colleague from West Virginia, no one has had a greater career here. Your service is of great

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distinction. We all admire you very much, and we are here today to honor you on this most important occasion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks time?

The President pro tempore.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I join those who honor my great friend, our great friend, the Senator from West Virginia. This has been a tradition. Each time a Senator has reached the position where he has served longer than anyone else before, we have had tributes such as this. It is my honor to be here with my good friend today.

Having known Carl Hayden and Strom Thurmond, both of whom have the distinction that Senator BYRD has had in my lifetime and my service in the Senate, I believe he joins a small but distinguished group of dedicated public servants, people who have devoted their lives to serving our country.

I had the honor of being the whip for 8 years, 4 years in the minority and 4 years in the majority. I remember so well what I called the Byrd history lessons. Maybe Senator BYRD didn't call them that, but each evening in those days Senator BYRD would come to the floor and give another statement about the history of the Senate. I believe those became the framework for the volumes he has written on the history of the Senate. I didn't need to read them; I listened to them. As a matter of fact, I think I listened to every one the Senator made because the then-majority leader, Howard Baker, would say to me: Teddy, it is your turn. I would be in the chair listening to Senator BYRD.

Winston Churchill once said: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

I don't know anyone in my lifetime that I would say has given so much as Senator BYRD.

Others have talked about what he did before he came into public life. I know he attended college while he was in the West Virginia House of Delegates and State Senate and finished law school as a working Member of the Senate.

He has truly given more than he ever received. But, really, I would say of my friend from West Virginia that I know of no man who has done so much to make the Senate a family. When I first came here, that was one of the first things that Senator Mike Mansfield said to me—that you have to realize you are living in a family. This is a family. Senator BYRD has made that his sort of mantra, and to be the person who rep-

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resents the family, reminding us that we are part of a family.

I remember so well, Senator BYRD, when you made such kind remarks about my wife Ann after she passed away in an aircraft accident. I also recall the days that you congratulated me on getting remarried, and then on the birth of our daughter Lily when, again, Senator BYRD took the floor. I will never forget the time you came to the floor and talked about the fact that my first grandchild had been born. Senator BYRD told me at that time that I had my first taste of immortality. Now that I have become the grandfather of 11 children, I have touched immortality a little bit more than most people perhaps. I stand in awe of the honor of being a grandfather. I will never forget what he said. That means you are going to go one generation beyond the generation you helped bring into the world. You have seen your children produce children, and that really matches your love for the Senate family.

I don't know of anybody here who has had a sorrow or an achievement when Senator BYRD hasn't taken the time to seek us out and either commiserate with us in our sorrow or tell us what a great achievement it was. It is a great achievement to be part of the Senate family and to be nurturing our own families.

Others have spoken about your dear wife Erma. I know how close the two of you were. I know that because of conversations we have had about Erma. We were all saddened when she passed away earlier this year, but I know she is looking down on you today, Senator BYRD. I know she is proud of your service and, if she were here, she would be right up there in the gallery. But she is up there somewhere looking at all of us.

Actually, many of you may not know this, but I met Senator BYRD during the Eisenhower administration. I remember sitting in the gallery the day you were sworn into the Senate in 1959. You were already in the House. When I got to the Senate, I was talking to the wife of Bob Bartlett, my predecessor, the Senator's good friend. I was told that the one person in the Senate I could trust would be BOB BYRD. Coming from her, that meant a great deal to me personally. We have worked together for 35 years now on the Appropriations Committee. I wish I could count the days when we were chairmen; when Senator BYRD was chairman, I would wander over to his room, and when I was chairman, he would come to my room. I remember one day—and he will

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not like this—he came over and said someone had given him some cigars, and he suggested that we ought to smoke a cigar. I had not smoked a cigar in 20 years, but I said it would be a good idea. When Senator BYRD makes a suggestion, it is a good idea. I joined him then. About 6 months later, I had somebody give me a couple of cigars, and I wandered over to Senator BYRD's office and said, "Let's share a cigar again." Senator BYRD said, "I have quit."

I was on that trip to London, too, at the British Parliamentary Conference, and in West Virginia when Senator BYRD was the host. I don't know if you know this, Senator.

I have a video of you when we were in London when we sat around, those Members of the American Senate who were there, after meeting with our colleagues from Britain, and we talked and you told us about your own history. I remember that so well. I remember asking you to recite the poem about your dog. We talk about this prodigious memory of Senator BYRD. I have never known anything that I could ask him to recite that he didn't have the ability to recite.

Having been here so long together, I come back to where I started. You have kept alive the spirit of family in this Senate. I think without the spirit of family, we would lose the essence of what it is to be here. I tell people that sometimes I sort of pinch myself to realize that I really am a Member of the Senate. Others can talk about their backgrounds. I don't talk about mine very much, but I certainly never had any reason to believe I would ever be standing here, and I think Senator BYRD could say the same thing.

We are here to honor the son of West Virginia, the patriarch of our Senate family. He is, as Senator McConnell said, a symbol of our history. I am here to thank you, Senator, for being a good friend. I think you have been one of the best friends I have had in the Senate, and you have really sustained me in times of sorrow and encouraged me in times of joy. I am here to honor you for your service; it is a great service. But mostly I am here because I am honored to be able to call you my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, this is truly a unique day in the life of the Senate, with the spotlight shining on Senator ROBERT BYRD in recognition of an enormous achievement, being the longest serving Senator in the history of the body. It is a remarkable achievement.

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Senator BYRD started his political career with an election in 1946, 60 years ago, and is still going strong. He served in the Senate at the same time that Harry S. Truman was President of the United States.

Just think about that for a moment. This is a man whose service has spanned the Presidencies of President Truman, President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, President Johnson, President Nixon, President Ford, President Carter, President Reagan, President Bush, President Clinton, and President Bush. It is quite an accolade. And Senator BYRD accurately states that he hasn't served under any President, however, he has served with Presidents. He is a scholar and devotee of the doctrine of separation of powers, something which seems to have been forgotten lately. But when the issue arose as to the line-item veto and the constitutional amendment for the balanced budget, Senator BYRD has been vociferous in defending the prerogatives of the Congress of the United States. He even goes so far from time to time to remind people that article I of the Constitution is for the Congress. You don't get to the executive branch until you get to article II. You don't get to the judicial branch until article III. In many ways the Supreme Court has rewritten the sequence of the Constitution taking primacy. There is an effort on the expansion of executive power, but Senator BYRD is the bulwark for separation of powers. To think that he was here when Jack Kennedy was here, as well as when Lyndon Baines Johnson was here—about whom so much has been written as the master of the Senate. There will be a sequel to that, and it will be about BOB BYRD. Senator BYRD was here when great men like Lyndon Johnson and Jack Kennedy strode these corridors for so many years. It is an enormous slice of history.

As a newcomer to the Senate, I watched Senator BYRD very closely. There is a lot to be learned from Senator BYRD. Senator BYRD was chairman of the Appropriations Committee when I was one of the younger members of that committee. One day, I thought Senator BYRD's allocations didn't match the budget resolution and I told him. It is sort of untoward to disagree with the chairman. I saw a magnanimity in Senator BYRD to listen to one of the younger Senators. I even called for a vote. The vote was 26 to 3. People said it was a great accomplishment to get two other Senators to join me, Alfonse D'Amato and Bob Kasten. We lost 26 to 3, but it was considered a victory, which is a testament to Senator BYRD's power.

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Senator BYRD said to me on that day: Some day, you will be chairman of the Appropriations Committee and you can make the allocations. I thought it entirely farfetched at that time that I would ever be chairman of the Appropriations Committee, but it may happen. I am next in line behind Senator Thad Cochran. It will be quite a formidable challenge because Senator BYRD continues to be ranking Democrat on the committee. To come up against this titan, this legend, he will probably do more to make the allocations if, as, and when I become chairman.

Senator BYRD has been a master tactician. I recall one early morning, about 3 a.m., when we Republicans were carrying on a filibuster. I believe it was on campaign finance reform. Senator Dole gathered us all together in a remote spot and said: Guys, don't show up on the Senate floor. Make Senator BYRD maintain a quorum.

For those who don't know the Senate rules, they are sufficiently complicated and we would not expect C-SPAN II watchers to know, if anybody is watching on C-SPAN II. But you have to have a quorum on the floor to conduct business, or somebody can suggest the absence of a quorum, and it just stops. So Senator BYRD had this idea about having some Republicans on the floor. Knowing the rules as he did, he directed the Sergeant at Arms to execute warrants of arrest for absent Senators. I have never seen this in my long tenure. Remember that, Senator BYRD?

Mr. BYRD. Yes, I do.

Mr. SPECTER. Now we have confirmation. I have called a witness here. The Sergeant at Arms was a little fellow, Henry Giugni. He started to patrol the halls. He came upon Senator Lowell Weicker. Now, Henry was about 5-foot-4, and Lowell Weicker was 6-foot-4. Lowell was at his fighting weight of about 240 at the time. It was about 3:30 in the morning. Do you know what happens with Senators at 3:30 in the morning? I won't say on the Senate floor. The Sergeant at Arms decided not to arrest Lowell Weicker. He made a very wise judgment. Instead, he went knocking on Senate doors. Senator Robert Packwood made the mistake of answering the door. Senator Packwood compelled them to carry him out of his office. He agreed to walk here, but he insisted on being carried into the Senate Chamber. I don't think Senator BYRD got his quorum, but he got his man, Senator Packwood.

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I once had the temerity to engage Senator BYRD in a debate. I have watched Senator BYRD very closely when he would control the floor with the parliamentary maneuver of getting unanimous consent before yielding the floor, which gave him the right to the floor.

I had read the rule book, and Senator BYRD contended that he could do that without unanimous consent if there had been no objection. I thought I had watched him with the rules to the contrary and engaged him in a lengthy debate. I did not win that debate, but it was a great learning experience.

Senator BYRD commanded the floor with great authority. In the old days, we used to have sessions that went all night. Senator BYRD was sitting in that chair, and he rose at about 12:18 a.m.—this is another true story; you get very few true stories out of Washington. We were all enervated. Some of us were even tired, but not BOB BYRD. He rose from his chair and he said: I ask unanimous consent that I may speak as long as I choose.

A Senator in this chair, whom I will not identify, rose as if to object. Senator BYRD looked at him as if his eyes were like laser beams, and the Senator sat down. Past midnight, Senator BYRD had unanimous consent to speak as long as he chose. It wasn't too long, but it was a great display of fortitude and authority.

My final comment about Senator BYRD is about the debates we have had on constitutional law. His scholarship on the institution is unparalleled, and that is a record which will never be broken. It is pretty hard to say "never," but when one looks at the volumes of his work, when one looks at the magnitude of his speeches—he used to speak every Friday afternoon for as long as he liked. He spoke to an empty Chamber, but he spoke to a full history book.

Senator BYRD once said to me that if he became President, he would make me his Attorney General. May the *Record* show that Senator BYRD is nodding in the affirmative, and Senator BYRD, if you become President, I expect you to live up to that promise.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate my good friend, Senator ROBERT BYRD, on becoming the longest serving Senator in the history of our great Nation. Senator BYRD has now served as Senator for 17,327 days. That is al-

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most as long as I have been alive. I fully expect to continue serving with him for many more days.

I know that during those 17,000-plus days in the Senate, Senator BYRD has inspired many. I also know that as we continue to witness his service in the days ahead in the Senate, he will continue to provide inspiration to this body and to all of my colleagues and to me. I am sure that in those days, just as he has in the past, Senator BYRD will continue to implore our colleagues to respect the wisdom of the Founders and the brilliance of our Constitution, which he so proudly carries as a symbol on his lapel every day, and during those days in the future, he will continue to remind us all in the Senate of how much we can and should learn from the history of our great country and the experience of this democracy.

He will continue, as he always has, fighting for the hard-working people of his beloved West Virginia, and he will, as he always has, continue to provide generous counsel to those of us who have far less experience than he does, for Senator BYRD truly has been and continues to be a mentor to all of us, and always, with his grace and with his dignity, setting an example for all Senators to act with that dignity, with that courtesy, and with that eloquence which is truly a legacy of ROBERT BYRD in the Senate. For me, as the No. 99 Senator and as one of the most junior in this body today, I am personally inspired and grateful to Senator BYRD for his achievements and for his example.

Just as my family has given me strength in my life, I know Senator BYRD's remarkable service would not have been possible without the love and support of his own family. I have often been moved by Senator BYRD's words about the power of the love and the bond he and his late wife Erma shared for decades. So as we honor Senator BYRD today, as we honor this institution, we also honor the memory of Erma, and we honor the rest of Senator BYRD's family as well.

It is a great privilege for me to represent the people of Colorado in this great Chamber. It is also a true honor to be a colleague to a historic figure in the name of Senator ROBERT C. BYRD of West Virginia.

Once again, I congratulate him.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues who came to the floor earlier today to mark a historic milestone. It isn't just a milestone for one man, it is a milestone for our Senate and our Nation.

Today, our colleague, ROBERT C. BYRD of West Virginia, who just left the Chamber, becomes the longest serving Senator in the history of the United States of America. Today marks Senator BYRD's 17,327th day in office; that is 47 years, 5 months, 1 week, and 2 days spent in service in the Senate on behalf of his beloved people of the State of West Virginia.

Many of us know Senator BYRD's impressive official biography. He has held more leadership positions in the Senate than any other Senator in our history, including 6 years as Senate majority leader, and 6 years as minority leader. Twice Senator BYRD has served as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and twice he has been elected by his colleagues as President pro tempore, a position that places him third in line to the Presidency of the United States.

In many ways, Senator BYRD's life is the story of the 20th century of America. He started from the most humble origins and has risen to the greatest heights, and he has done this not on the backs of others but by the sweat of his brow and the power of his massive intellect.

To me, one of the most impressive facts about Senator BYRD is that he studied for his law degree while he was serving as a Member of Congress. He would make law by day and study it at night. True to form, Senator BYRD not only earned his doctorate of jurisprudence from American University in 1963, it was awarded cum laude.

Senator BYRD may also be one of the last great orators in the U.S. Senate, and whether the topic is the war in Iraq or the Peloponnesian War, the basic ingredients of a great speech are always present in Senator BYRD's address: clear, substantive thinking and the rhetorical skills to effectively express it.

For Senator BYRD, noble purposes are foremost as his motive and objective. He doesn't take the easy road, and he doesn't pander. When President Bill Clinton signed the line-

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item veto into law in 1996, it was immediately challenged in court by a group of six Senators, the first of whom, of course, was Senator ROBERT C. BYRD. Senator BYRD, though loyal to his party and loyal to his President, was loyal first to his view of the Constitution. He believed the law was unconstitutional and concentrated too much power in the executive branch of government. Ultimately, the Supreme Court agreed with Senator BYRD and disagreed with the Congress and the President who enacted the law.

Almost 10 years later, Senator BYRD took to the floor of the Senate, speaking out and facing the wrath of popular sentiment in opposing the invasion of Iraq. At the time, it wasn't easy for him to vote no, nor was it a comfortable decision to defend at home, but Senator BYRD didn't shrink from the challenge—he never has—and he did something which has become quite rare in American politics: He stood up and led. He said that of all the thousands of votes he has cast—more than 17,000 to be exact—that vote opposing the war in Iraq is the one in which he takes the greatest pride.

I might add just parenthetically, I share that sentiment. In this case, too, I believe ultimately history will prove all of us right who voted no on the use of force in Iraq.

Senator BYRD has an unquenchable willingness to serve, a willingness to lead and carry the burdens and responsibilities of leadership. Above all else, he has done these things while continuing to be a truly honorable man. When all is said and done, the most important words that will be spoken about ROBERT C. BYRD will not be that he was a great speaker or great statesman or great U.S. Senator—he is certainly all of that—the true measure of this man will not be found in recounting the number of days he has served in this body; rather, it will be found in his strength of character and in his integrity.

That character and integrity are evidenced in many ways by his love of his beloved late wife Erma. He was such a devoted husband and partner. Even as she suffered serious illness in the last years and months of her life, he never left her side. To his children and grandchildren, he remains a loving father, a caring grandfather, and a wise teacher. To his friends, he is a man whose word can always be counted on. To his country, he is a leader who found power only in the commitment to service. And to his State, he is a shining example of the very best that is in all of us.

I am honored to be counted as one of those who call ROBERT C. BYRD a friend, and I know this about my friend:

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Today he marks a milestone that no other Senator in the history of the United States has marked, but his success will be measured in terms of his faithfulness to the people who placed him here and the trust of the people of West Virginia. They have never been betrayed by this great man.

Although he has risen to the highest levels of power, he has never forgotten where he comes from, who sent him, and what his mission is.

If my colleagues will allow me two personal observations about Senator BYRD and to tell two stories that I think really are symbols of his view of the world and the great power of his intellect. One of the first involved a debate on the floor of the U.S. Senate about the National Endowment for the Arts. It occurred a few years ago. A Senator on the other side of the aisle offered an amendment to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts with the argument that there were art displays or exhibits that were being funded with Federal dollars that were embarrassing. This Senator went on to argue that it really made no sense for us to subsidize the arts in America because they were out of the reach of the common man and we should allow the patrons of the arts, those private benefactors, to take care and not our government.

I came to the floor to argue against that position, telling the story of how my immigrant mother used to take me in the car across the bridge to the art museum in St. Louis, this woman with an eighth grade education, to show me works of art and talk about artists she knew very little about but wanted to learn more about. As I was telling my story, I saw Senator BYRD come on to the floor, and I assumed he was coming to talk about some other issue, but he asked for recognition. He stood here at his desk, as he has so many times, and completely enthralled this Chamber as he told the story of his simple life in West Virginia where he was orphaned and raised by other members of the family and how one fine day, his new stepfather took him out and bought him a fiddle. With that fiddle, he started taking music lessons and developed a passion for music. He talked about what music and the arts meant to him growing up as a poor boy in a small town in West Virginia. It was a classic ROBERT C. BYRD moment, taking a chapter in his life from many years ago and bringing it to application today.

The second experience I recall is one that I have told over and over to friends in Illinois. If I hadn't been there to see it, I would not have believed it. It goes back to the days

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when I was a Member of the House of Representatives on the Appropriations Committee. Senator BYRD, a leader in the Senate, had a transportation appropriations bill that passed the Senate with several noteworthy projects for his State of West Virginia. A Republican Senator across the rotunda took exception to these earmarks for the State of West Virginia and vowed that when he came to conference between the Senate and the House, he would take out these projects for the State of West Virginia. They were excessive, in his view. He was interviewed by several news media, including the *Washington Post*.

The day of the great confrontation took place just a couple floors—one floor below us in the appropriations conference room. It is a long room with a huge table. The Senate conferees sit on one side of the table. Senator Mark Hatfield was then chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, of which Senator BYRD was a member, and I sat on the other side of the table with House Appropriations Committee members, waiting for this classic, historic confrontation between Senator ROBERT C. BYRD and his critic from the House of Representatives. It was interesting because as we all sat down, there was one chair that was left empty. Directly across the table from his House critic was the empty chair Senator BYRD would occupy. The moment came when finally the House Member was recognized, and he stood up and with a lengthy speech took exception to the fact that Senator BYRD was putting these projects in for the State of West Virginia. When he finished and had exhausted himself—no one interrupted him—and sat down, Senator BYRD asked for recognition in this appropriations conference room.

I am going to get a few of these facts wrong because I didn't write them down. Senator BYRD would never get them wrong. But I trust that at the end of the story, you will understand what happened that day.

Senator BYRD reflected for a moment, as he often does, looking to the ceiling, and then he spoke. He said: In 1830, Daniel Webster wrote his famous letter to Mr. Hayne. And then he paused, and Senator BYRD said: If my memory serves me, it was January that he wrote the letter. January the 28th, Senator BYRD said. And if I am not mistaken, he said, it was a Thursday. And he went on to explain how Webster wrote the letter to Hayne explaining the basics of our Constitution, explaining that in the House of Representatives, a State as small as West Virginia doesn't stand a chance with a limited population and very little political

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power to get things done; the State of West Virginia has to rely on the Senate, where every State has two Senators. And if he, ROBERT C. BYRD, didn't stand up for his small State of West Virginia in the Senate, who would? What chance would a small State have?

It was the classic argument that really was the foundation for the creation of Congress. Senator BYRD that day won the argument, won his case before the conference committee.

I thought at the time, years before I was elected to the Senate, I wish I had a videotape of that moment. That was one of those great moments which I have seen here in the Congress. So when I came to the Senate a few years later, I went up to Senator BYRD and I said to him: I will never forget that day when you had the debate in the appropriations conference committee about the projects for West Virginia and how you not only recalled the exchange between Daniel Webster and Mr. Hayne and the historical and constitutional significance, you not only recalled the year and the day, but you recalled the day of the week it occurred. I said: When you said, "I believe it was a Thursday," I was just absolutely amazed. Senator BYRD reflected for a moment, and he said: Well, I believe it was a Thursday. I said: I am not questioning you; no, I am not questioning you; I am just telling you that I thought that detail brought more to that debate than anyone could imagine.

So as luck would have it, 2 hours later, we had a vote on the floor here, and Senator BYRD at this desk called me over. I came over to his desk, and he said: Senator Durbin, I was almost certain it was a Thursday, and I asked my staff to pull out a perpetual calendar, and if you will look here, January 28, 1820, was, in fact, a Thursday. I said: I never doubted you for a moment.

I have heard him stand on the floor reciting poetry at length. I have heard him recount the debates of this Senate and the history of this Nation in the type of detail that puts all the rest of us to shame. He is truly not just an institution of West Virginia, not just an institution of the Senate; he is a national treasure. He brings to debate in this Chamber—what little debate we have anymore—a certain gravity, a certain importance that reminds us why we are here, that we have been fortunate enough to be called by the people who vote in our States to be one of the few men and women to serve in this great Chamber, and in serving, we not only represent them, we represent a long line of history, of great men

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and women who have had this opportunity to serve in the U.S. Senate.

Today, of course, is recognition of his special place in the history of our Nation and in the history of the Senate: 17,327 days in office—47 years, 5 months, 1 week, and 2 days—not only witnessing the parade of history but being such a major part of it.

Senator BYRD, I salute you and your service to the people of West Virginia and this Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I have been very much looking forward to this moment.

First, I ask unanimous consent that an article which appeared in the *Charleston Gazette* on June 12, 2006, be printed in the *Record* following my remarks.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, this article embraces the comments of many dear friends of the Senator, and I say with some humility, a few of my own comments as well.

I think back on the 28 years that I have been privileged to have represented the Commonwealth of Virginia in this Chamber.

There is no single individual for whom I have greater reverence or respect than my dear friend, the senior Senator from West Virginia. We bonded together early on. When I arrived here, he sought me out, and I sought him out because our two great States at one time were one State, the State of Virginia. But now, even though we are two States, our States have so many issues in common.

Many times Senator BYRD and I have come to this floor with regard to the subject of the coal miners, their safety, their ability to operate and provide that essential component to America's energy needs, coal; how dangerous is the profession, how much we respect their families and others who share the risk that the miners take every day.

Then, more specifically, I remember so well how we have worked together all of these many years in support of clean-coal-burning technology.

Coal is the largest single reserve of energy that this Nation possesses—the largest, far beyond petroleum, far beyond natural gas, far beyond the other renewables, and so forth. Coal is there. Our research and industrial base works year

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after year to try to see how we can consume these vast coal reserves and thereby become less and less dependent on importing our energy needs, but burning it in such a way that it does the least possible harm to the environment, be it the air we breathe or the problems associated with acid rain, and so forth.

I commend my dear friend for all the work that he has done and will continue to do for years on clean coal technology.

Virginia and West Virginia also share a common border that is basically established by the Appalachian Mountains. This part of Virginia and West Virginia has its own magnificent qualities, particularly the sturdy lifestyle of the people who choose purposefully to live in those hills and valleys and those mountains which are so often ravaged by heavy floods and so often ravaged by other natural disasters, such as snowstorms.

Senator BYRD and I many times have gone to visit those regions in the aftermath of a natural disaster. We find no desire on the part of those people to leave those regions, only to remain.

Senator BYRD was instrumental in passing legislation which provides recognition for those geographic areas of the Appalachian range that are deserving of financial assistance and other forms of assistance because of the rigorous, challenging lifestyle in these regions. He has seen that funding has remained these many years equitably allocated between the several States.

I think of him foremost as one who is a family man. How often he has reminisced about the members of his family. He speaks with a great sense of pride and humility on how his family, much like every Member of this Senate, is closely involved in the life of the Senate, closely involved because of the commitments the families make: the many long hours Senators are required to either be in the Chamber or traveling throughout their States, traveling throughout the 50 States, or, indeed, around the world. It is a challenge for the families, and BOB BYRD is a family man, along with his beloved wife Erma.

I remember so well early on in my career, I had the privilege to be invited by Senator BYRD, to join him on a number of codels to various parts of the world. We served together on the Senate Committee on Armed Services these many years. So often we would visit the troops and others throughout the world.

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One trip I remember ever so vividly, he took the first congressional codel to the then-Soviet Union to visit with Gorbachev, who had risen to a powerful position in the Soviet Union after a lot of strife and turmoil. That man exhibited extraordinary courage. I so looked forward to our important visit, as did every member of that codel—I think there were about a dozen of us who joined Senator BYRD to go over to the Soviet Union.

Senator Strom Thurmond, whose record Senator BYRD, with a sense of humility, passes today, was on that codel. And as we flew to the Soviet Union, I had the privilege—along with one or two others—of working with BOB BYRD on remarks he wanted to make. That was an important set of remarks. Strom Thurmond represented the Republican side of that delegation. We were basically equally divided. I remember working through that statement well into the wee hours of the night as that plane was traversing that long distance.

The following day, Gorbachev announced he was going to allocate an hour and a half to meet this delegation. The time was carefully allocated by Senator BYRD and Senator Thurmond to members of the delegation.

I recall that I was the junior man on that delegation. When he got to me, I had 2 minutes. I was proud to get 2 minutes. Our dear colleague and friend, the retiring Senator this year, Senator Sarbanes, senior, of course, to me at that time, turned to me and said: I will give you my 3 minutes so you can have 5 minutes because you are on that Committee on Armed Services, and there is nothing more important to be covered today than the issues relating to national defense. I will never forget that act of courtesy by Senator Sarbanes.

Senator BYRD delivered his remarks flawlessly. Gorbachev listened very carefully. Gorbachev made a few notes on a pad. He was followed, then, by Strom Thurmond, who delivered one of his thunderous, heartfelt remarks, beginning with how he stormed the shore on D-day and how the Soviet Army was pressing on Germany from another direction. It was a confluence of primarily those two forces and Great Britain and, of course, their allies and the free French who brought a conclusion to the war. Gorbachev's father had been in the war. Strom reminisced, jokingly saying that he hoped he had not hurt his father. I recall Gorbachev very much was moved by that comment.

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That was the type of thing for which Senator BYRD was so famous: putting together those delegations, going to those places in the world around which the axle of history was evolving at that time, or the spokes of history around that axle. What a privilege it was to travel with this great man.

I think of him as a historian. This Senator does not have the temerity, and I don't know of anyone who would challenge BOB BYRD on the history of this great institution. No man hath greater love for this Senate than ROBERT BYRD. He has expressed that with a sense of humility many times in speeches in the Senate.

When he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a copy of the Constitution—he almost knows it by heart—he always opens that little book. He can, as quickly as anyone in this Senate, find those passages that are relevant to the debate at hand or the issues at hand. Those are things we remember about him with such great respect.

He is a humorist. He can be tough. He can be firm. But, oh, can he bring a chuckle about in the hearts of all of us. Sometimes in this Senate when things hit the high point of stress, I have seen BOB BYRD take to the floor with his very soft voice, dispel tension, dispel some of the rancor, and inject a note of humor.

BOB BYRD is also, it might surprise Members, an artist. One painting he did many years ago, some of us through the years have been privileged to get a copy of that painting. He has an eye for art. He also has an eye for music. I do recall the times when he played the fiddle, the music that he loved and still loves. I think he composed a little bit on the side from time to time.

I can recount so many things where he is far more capable than I. I have never considered myself a poet, but BOB BYRD can recall from memory hundreds of poems and recite them at times when it seems most appropriate.

He is a family man, historian, humorist, artist, musician, composer and poet. And then we think back to his respect for the Bible, and second only to the Bible, his respect and love for the U.S. Constitution.

I went back and checked a little history. This Chamber honored me the other night after I cast my 10,000th vote, a very modest accomplishment in the face of BOB BYRD's accomplishment, my 28 years. He has been here just short of twice as long.

Also, someone thoughtfully said that I was the second longest serving Senator from Virginia. Lo and behold, who

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was the longest serving Senator from Virginia? None other than BOB BYRD's close friend of years past, Harry F. Byrd, Sr. I repeat, senior, because when I came to the Senate, Harry F. Byrd, Jr., was the Member of the Senate with whom I was privileged to serve as his junior Senator. But it is interesting, Harry F. Byrd, Sr., was born in Martinsburg, Berkeley County, WV. There you have it. He was the longest serving Senator and remains with that record at 32 years and 8 months for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Now BOB BYRD takes it not only for the State but for the whole of the history of the Senate.

There has to be something, I say most respectfully, in the water down in West Virginia, or the lifestyle, the hardiness, or the courage of the people that enabled these two distinguished Virginians, ROBERT C. BYRD and Harry Flood Byrd, Sr., to become the longest serving in their respective States.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the *Charleston (WV) Gazette*, June 12, 2006]

THE PILLAR OF THE SENATE: 10 PRESIDENTS LATER, BYRD LONGEST-SERVING SENATOR

(By Paul J. Nyden)

Sen. ROBERT C. BYRD becomes the longest-serving member of the U.S. Senate today, having represented West Virginians for 17,327 days in the chamber.

BYRD began serving in the Senate more than 47 years ago, on Jan. 3, 1959, after spending six years in the House of Representatives and six years in the West Virginia Legislature.

He also has cast more votes by far than any member of the Senate: 17,662 times, as of last Friday.

"I consider him to be the pillar of the Senate," says Sen. Paul Sarbanes, D-Md. "His commitment to the United States Senate and its history, customs and procedures is equaled only by his commitment to the state of West Virginia, our nation and our Constitution."

BYRD's impact on fellow senators personally rivals his institutional role, some of his colleagues said.

"Senator BYRD has been a very, very important figure in my life," said Sen. John Warner, a Virginia Republican. "He is such a magnificent teacher of the history of the Senate."

Warner recalls a conversation he had with BYRD when Warner was new to the Senate. "He said, 'At one time, our states were together. I don't want to put them back together, but I want to work together as full and equal partners,'" Warner said.

"I enjoy the man," Warner said. "He is wonderful."

Up to now, the Senate's longest-serving member had been the late Strom Thurmond, R-S.C. The third- and fourth-longest-serving members are Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., and Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawaii, both of whom have been there more than 43 years.

“BYRD epitomizes the role that the framers of our Constitution envisioned for the legislative branch,” Sarbanes said.

In fact, *The Almanac of American Politics*, a widely consulted volume on federal politics, describes BYRD as the politician who “may come closer to the kind of senator the Founding Fathers had in mind than any other.”

Since President Bush took office, BYRD has been one of the Senate’s leading voices on challenging the war in Iraq, preserving Social Security and protecting workers’ jobs and safety.

Despite his strong positions, however, BYRD said he regrets the increasing animosity in both legislative bodies. He said he has always worked to be bipartisan.

“I thank the people of West Virginia for having repeatedly expressed their faith in me,” BYRD said. “I never lose sight of that. Every morning of every day of my life, my first thought is, ‘What can I do today for West Virginia?’”

BYRD’s contribution to the state has been immense, said Gov. Joe Manchin and members of West Virginia’s congressional delegation.

“I don’t know of a person in West Virginia who has not been touched, or benefited in a most positive way, by Senator BYRD’s service,” Manchin said. “I mean, Democrats, Republicans, independents and people who don’t vote—they all benefit.”

BYRD has long been known as a “legend” in West Virginia, said Jay Rockefeller, BYRD’s junior Democratic colleague for the state. “But now he has surpassed even the great legends of the Senate to become the longest serving senator in U.S. history.”

He can take credit for “highways, dams, bridges, federal facilities and jobs, health centers and educational institutions,” Rockefeller said. “And the best part is, he’s not finished.”

“What do you get when you multiply the power of the beacon by the strength of a workhorse by the steadiness of an anchor? ROBERT C. BYRD,” said Rep. Nick J. Rahall, D-W.Va.

BYRD’s “ability to deliver for our state” is awe-inspiring, said David Hardesty, the president of West Virginia University. “His votes are guided by his understanding of the Constitution and by his dedication to the people of this state.”

Manchin also emphasized BYRD’s future.

“People also need to know that Senator BYRD has a lot of years of service left in him,” he said. “When people ask about what he has done, he says, ‘I want to talk about people who can help me do what we still need to do.’”

Born in Wilkesboro, N.C., in 1917, BYRD grew up in a coal mining family in Sophia, Raleigh County.

Nearly 20 years later, he married Erma Ora James, who passed away on March 25 of this year. Today, Mrs. Byrd would have turned 89.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is an extraordinary honor to be able to speak a few words about my friend, the senior Senator from the State of West Virginia, as he makes history yet again.

There are precious few opportunities in life to recognize greatness in our midst, but today we have that opportunity. We honor our friend not simply because he’s become the longest serving Senator in our history, but also because there’s no doubt that he’s earned his rightful place besides

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Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, John Calhoun, and other giants in Senate history.

BOB BYRD's life is a tribute to the power of the American dream—rising from humble beginnings, this son of the Appalachian coalfields reached the pinnacle of power and accomplishment through decades of hard work and unwavering dedication.

His life is also a tribute to the power of love and commitment. BOB BYRD's commitment and love for the Senate and the country is total and complete, just as they are for the people of West Virginia and his beloved Erma, with whom he shared one of America's great love stories.

Erma and BOB would have celebrated her birthday today—and we're saddened that she could not be here to share this extraordinary moment. But we know she's looking down from Heaven with a smile for the young boy who once shared his chewing gum with her more than 70 years ago.

This is a special day for me as well, because it's a time to tell my friend how much he means to me, and how much I believe his service means to our Nation.

For longer than I've been in public life, I've known ROBERT C. BYRD. I first came to know him during the famed West Virginia Presidential primary of 1960.

BOB was a new Senator and moving up through the ranks as a protege of Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson. My brother Jack and BOB were colleagues in the Senate, but Jack knew it was inevitable that BOB would be looking out for LBJ in the Mountain State, and hoping to deny us the victory we needed.

Jack had won the Wisconsin primary, and the stakes were high in West Virginia.

It was a spirited campaign in which all of us in the Kennedy family got to see the extraordinary qualities of the people of West Virginia—kindness, compassion for their fellow citizens, and perseverance even in the face of enormous obstacles—the qualities that BOB BYRD knew and loved. Jack campaigned extremely well in the State and came to love the people too, and he never forgot the boost they gave him during that hard-fought campaign.

President Kennedy and ROBERT C. BYRD formed a powerful partnership, and one of Jack's first official acts in office was to authorize the shipment of emergency rations to help the people of Appalachia recover from a disaster.

They worked together to create the Appalachian Regional Commission, which lifted thousands out of poverty, and

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eliminated many of the barriers that had isolated the region from the economic mainstream of the Nation. They invested in the people, and it worked. President Kennedy and Senator ROBERT C. BYRD understood that if you give Americans opportunity and hope, there is no limit to what they can accomplish.

For me personally, it's impossible to imagine the Senate without Senator BYRD. He defeated me for majority whip in 1971. We both thought we had the votes lined up to win, and it was BOB who taught me how to count votes as he went on to become an outstanding whip and later an outstanding majority leader. My consolation prize was being set free to focus on the legislative issues I care most about.

Over the years in the Senate together, we've all come to rely on Senator BYRD as the great defender of this institution and the champion of the Constitution.

He doesn't defend the Constitution simply when it's in fashion to do so. He doesn't yield when political convenience suggests that the legislative branch should demur for the sake of comity or to accomplish a popular goal.

BOB BYRD understands that the Founders intended each branch of government to have powers that could place them in conflict, and that the powers Congress cedes to the executive today may have dire consequences for the Nation tomorrow.

In this role, he is the guardian of the Senate and the ideals that Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton fought to enshrine when they created our government.

I have many warm memories of BOB BYRD as leader, as friend, and as scholar. One that comes to mind now is our barnstorming trip through West Virginia during the 2004 Presidential campaign.

We traveled by bus around the State from Charleston to Mingo and Logan counties and wherever we stopped, you could feel the love and respect that the people of West Virginia had for BOB BYRD. At one stop, he even jumped up onto the back of a flatbed truck to deliver a stemwinder. I was committed to the campaign as well, but that was a tactic I thought best be left to BOB.

In the end we came up short in West Virginia on election day, but I'll never forget the fun we had those last few weeks of October, and I'm eternally grateful to BOB for inviting me. I'll cherish the memory forever.

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Of all the remarkable attributes of Senator BYRD, few have impressed more than his ability to memorize and recite poetry. As a child, this was always one of my greatest challenges at school and I'm awed by BOB's extraordinary talent.

His mind must hold hundreds of verses that he can recite at a moment's notice. One of my favorites describes the responsibilities we have as public servants to address the causes of the problems that confront us, not just the consequences of those problems.

It's about whether it's better to build a fence around the edge of a cliff, or keep an ambulance ready in the valley below.

I can't recite it from memory like he can, but this is how it goes. It was written by Joseph Malins in 1895:

'Twas a dangerous cliff, as they freely confessed,
Though to walk near its crest was so pleasant;
But over its terrible edge there had slipped
A duke, and full many a peasant.

The people said something would have to be done,
But their projects did not at all tally.
Some said "Put a fence 'round the edge of the cliff,"
Some, "An ambulance down in the valley."

The lament of the crowd was profound and was loud,
As the tears overflowed with their pity;
But the cry for the ambulance carried the day
As it spread through the neighbouring city.

A collection was made, to accumulate aid,
And the dwellers in highway and alley
Gave dollars or cents—not to furnish a fence—
But an ambulance down in the valley.

"For the cliff is all right if you're careful," they said;
"And if folks ever slip and are dropping,
It isn't the slipping that hurts them so much
As the shock down below—when they're stopping."

So for years (we have heard), as these mishaps occurred
Quick forth would the rescuers sally,
To pick up the victims who fell from the cliff,
With the ambulance down in the valley.

Said one, in a plea, "It's a marvel to me
That you'd give so much greater attention
To repairing results than to curing the cause;
You had much better aim at prevention.

For the mischief, of course, should be stopped at its source;
Come, neighbours and friends, let us rally.
It is far better sense to rely on a fence
Than an ambulance down in the valley."

"He is wrong in his head," the majority said;
"He would end all our earnest endeavour.

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He's a man who would shirk this responsible work,
But we will support it forever.

Aren't we picking up all, just as fast as they fall,
And giving them care liberally?
A superfluous fence is of no consequence,
If the ambulance works in the valley."

The story looks queer as we've written it here,
But things oft occur that are stranger.
More humane, we assert, than to succour the hurt
Is the plan of removing the danger.

The best possible course is to safeguard the source
By attending to things rationally.
Yes, build up the fence and let us dispense
With the ambulance down in the valley.

That's the principle BOB BYRD has followed throughout his brilliant career in the Senate. He's a Senator for the ages, and it's an extraordinary honor and privilege to know him, to serve with him, and to learn from him.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I will soon have been here 34 years. That is not very long compared to the man about whom I rise to say a few words. I understand this was the day. I was in my office and, having heard the eloquence that was spoken today to my good friend, Senator BYRD, I figured that I couldn't do him justice just coming down at this very moment, as I am. But everybody knows why we speak today when we attempt to honor him for his devotion to his colleagues, to the institution, to the Constitution, and to the United States of America.

The distinguished Senator knows what each of us thinks of him. He knows, better than we each do, what we think of him. He could tell me what Pete Domenici thinks about BOB BYRD, and probably be close to right. And vice versa. He has occasionally spoken about what he thinks of me. I don't think he takes it lightly. I think what he says he means. He has been far too generous in what he has said. But I will choose, among all the things, for just a moment, to say what I think mostly about him, as I think about his time here and revere it.

First, there is something about learning to appreciate what the Senate is as a place, as a house, as an institution. Woe be it any man or woman who is elected to this place and who serves for any length of time and doesn't feel it, doesn't understand it, doesn't quite grasp what a rare place this Senate is. It is hard to say why it is. One could talk about the men and women who made it like this. We could talk about the rules of the Senate that made it like this. We could

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talk about the two or three great qualities, the fact that you can offer amendments freely—which has been known as one of those real attributes of this place. You can come down here on an afternoon while something is being debated on health, and if you can get the floor you can offer an amendment about Iraq. Somehow or another, you get the feel of the place, the limitation on trying to get things done that this threat to filibuster offers, and how that plays, and the minority and majority and what it means in this place.

You know at some point in time if you have ever had to make a decision on the floor of the Senate that was important just because it was important to the Senate, then ROBERT BYRD would be there to stand up and congratulate you. That is, if as chairman of the Budget Committee I had to get up and say to the Senate: I want to admonish you that if you do this or that you are challenging the rules of the Senate—if I would look around and expect some help, the walls would give me help. And it would be ROBERT BYRD saying: Listen carefully, if you are talking about the Senate.

That is why I came here, because of all his qualities, I think he will best be known as a man of the Senate, as a man who understood the Senate—what made it great and different, unique. He is noted for his great ability to manifest so many great historic concepts, of modern times and ancient times, and today debate them, deliver them, state them from memory, and truly inform us what they mean.

His understanding of freedom is legendary, what American freedom is. But today I chose to congratulate him for not letting up, in all his years—never letting up on the proposition that the Senate is a special place. He will go down in history because he has regularly, habitually, without hesitation informed us of what a special place the Senate is by virtue of what we have been given, what was bestowed upon us in the Constitution, how our Founding Fathers have accredited this place, what its rules have become through its leaders of the past, and how the halls just reek with all of that past and just keep making it the Senate.

That is what he is; that is what he has done. He is the Senate. The longer he is here, the more he is that. I don't know how many years it took him to become it, to know it, to relish it as he has passed it on to each of us. Certainly, by the time I came in 1972, and I have been here 33 going on 34 years, he already was there and was preaching that to all of us. Some of us began to understand it to where we could stand up and say: Hey, don't forget, fellow Senators,

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this is the Senate. Let's not do an injustice to it. Let's not violate it.

I won't state names, but I remember very young Senators who wouldn't think of talking that way. But 10 years later, that is the way they talked, that is the way they behaved. I venture to say each and every one who comes to my mind, if you ask them where they got that feeling, that rapture for this place, probably among the very few things they would mention, they would mention ROBERT C. BYRD.

Congratulations for all the times spent in breaking all the records for the time, but most of all congratulations from me, to a Senate man, a man who makes the Senate what it is and likes to tell everybody else around what it is, and in particular likes to make sure Senators grow up and begin to relish it as he has, and never forgets what it is.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Cornyn). The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I first came to the U.S. Senate 40 years ago next year, not as a Senator but as a legislative assistant. Senator Kennedy was here then in his second term. Senator BYRD had been in the Congress since 1953. I was working for Howard Baker, the first Republican Senator to be elected from Tennessee.

I noticed over the years how he and Senator BYRD became good friends. The strength of that friendship was demonstrated in 1980 when the Republicans gained control of the Senate—which surprised virtually everyone, gaining 12 seats. Among the shocks that would occur is that Howard Baker, who was then the Republican leader—he refused to call himself the minority leader, but the Republican leader—was to become majority leader and ROBERT BYRD, who was the Democratic leader, would have to be the minority leader.

I remember two stories Senator Baker tells about that incident which had a lot to do with shaping what happened in the Senate shortly after that.

Senator Baker went to see Senator BYRD, and as I have been told, he said: BOB, I wonder if you would be willing to keep your office. Well, that got him off to a good start with BOB BYRD. I am sure that incident must have caused the Senate to work much more smoothly over the next few years. Senator Baker kept the minority leader's office and expanded it, and Senator BYRD kept the majority leader's office even though he was the minority leader.

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But the second thing that happened was this: The new majority leader, Howard Baker, said to the stepping down majority leader, BOB BYRD: “BOB, I would like to make an arrangement with you.” Senator BYRD said to Senator Baker: “What is that, Howard?” He said: “I would like to make an arrangement about surprises. I will not surprise you if you won’t surprise me.” According to Senator Baker, Senator BYRD replied: “Let me think about it.” They got back together the next day, and BOB BYRD gave Howard Baker his word: No surprises. According to Senator Baker, that word was never broken during the entire time Senator Baker was the majority leader and Senator BYRD was the minority leader. I am sure the Senate and this country benefited greatly because of the trust those two men, who usually had very different opinions on issues, had with one another.

The other thing I would like to say about Senator BYRD is this: I came to the U.S. Senate as a Senator many years later, the same year the Presiding Officer came from Texas. It was in 2003 when we were sworn in, and that was exactly a half century after BOB BYRD came to the Congress. Each of us in our class made what I believe we still call maiden speeches—our first speech on the subject that was most important to us. The subject that was most important to me—and still is—is what it means to be an American, concepts that unify our country. I find it absolutely remarkable how our country, among all others, has accumulated this magnificent diversity but has found a way to bind it into a single country based on a few fragile principles that are found in our founding documents and by our common language and by our saga of American history.

There is no one in the Senate—even though many of us try—no one in the Senate who understands and expresses that better than Senator ROBERT C. BYRD. He understands what it means to be an American. He votes that way. For example, when the No Child Left Behind Act came up in the Senate before I was elected to this body, the legislation focused on reading and math. Senator BYRD insisted that the Senate bill include a \$100 million authorization for the teaching of what he called traditional American history. Our seniors in high school are scoring lower on U.S. history than on any other subject. In other words, our high school seniors don’t score lowest on math or science; they score lowest on U.S. history. Those are the worst scores our seniors have. In focusing on the need to do a better job of teaching history to

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young Americans, Senator BYRD is making an effort to make sure we remember where our country came from.

When I made my maiden speech and then introduced a modest bill to try to create summer academies for outstanding teachers and students of American history in 2003, Senator BYRD came to the floor. Senator BYRD co-sponsored the bill, and then he showed the great compliment to me of showing up at the hearing before the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to testify for the bill. As I said, it was my 1st year in the Senate; it was his 50th year in Congress.

So I congratulate him for his service. I congratulate him for his relationship with other Senators, his word being his bond, as it was in the example with Senator Baker, and I admire his work in helping to remind us in this body and all of us in this country of what it means to be an American. That will be one of his lasting legacies.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I cannot be in the Chamber on this somewhat historic day without recognizing the fact that one of our colleagues today becomes the longest serving Member of the U.S. Senate. Senator BOB BYRD is a special Member of this body and has been a good friend to all 99 current Members, as well as all the previous Members of the Senate who have had the pleasure of serving with him.

I will never forget the first week I was here making my rounds of the other Senators I did not know. When I came to Senator BYRD, he, of course, knew immediately who I was and engaged me in a conversation about some facts regarding my service in the House and some other issues that were personal that let me know how much he cared about the Senate by taking the time to research the background of individuals who become Members of the Senate.

I will always cherish the fact that during that conversation and in subsequent conversations I have had with him, he shared with me the fact that his favorite Member of the Senate has always been Senator Richard B. Russell of my home State. Senator Russell served in this body for 34 years, and I happen to hold the seat of Senator Russell. I have an office in the Senate Russell Building. So I have a number of ties to Senator Russell, and I also have such great respect and admiration for him. To hear Senator BYRD talk in such glowing terms about a man from my State for whom I have such

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respect gave me a warm feeling about this man with whom I was about to engage in service in the Senate.

He is a remarkable man. He is a man who, without question, believes in the Constitution of the United States and thinks we ought to be more bold in our adherence to that Constitution.

In that respect, again, in that same first week I was here, I received in my office mail a copy of the U.S. Constitution from Senator BYRD, along with a letter from him saying that as a Member of the Senate, I should always remember that this has been our guiding light and has served us well during every single day that our country has been free and democratic.

As we help share and celebrate with him on this historic day, I extend my congratulations to him on his service to our country and his service in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, before the distinguished Senator departs, I thank him for his kind remarks and thank him for his service on the Armed Services Committee.

He mentioned Richard Russell. Indeed, he had many years of service on the Armed Services Committee. I know he would be very proud of what Senator Chambliss has done to carry on the traditions which he instituted.

I earlier shared my respect for ROBERT BYRD and that great class of Senators with whom he worked in this institution, among them Harry F. Byrd, Sr., Richard B. Russell, and John Stennis. They were quite a team, and we have all learned from them. I must say, Senator Chambliss carries on those traditions with his great State.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I congratulate my good friend, ROBERT C. BYRD, on becoming the longest serving Senator in American history. Senator BYRD is an institution within this institution that we all dearly love. For more than 47 years in the Senate, he has served America and his beloved West Virginia with firm purpose, confident that his work is to do their work. He has done it extraordinarily well.

Senator BYRD's place in history was assured long before this milestone. He is distinguished more by his love for the Senate than by the length of his service. Senator BYRD knows the history and rules of the Senate better than any of us serving today—perhaps better than anyone who has ever served this body. He has defended the traditions and prerogatives of the Senate as strongly as any Senator ever

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has. Senator BYRD reveres our Constitution, a copy of which he always carries in his pocket, and is as firmly committed to our Constitution as any American ever has been.

To just give one example, I saw that commitment in our work together against the line-item veto, which Congress passed and President Clinton signed into law in 1996. In the floor consideration of that bill, Senator BYRD illuminated the debate, as he so often does, by reaching back into history. He quoted the 18th century English jurist, Sir William Blackstone, who wrote:

In all tyrannical governments, the supreme magistracy, or the right of both making and enforcing the laws, is vested in one and the same man, or one and the same body of men. And wherever these two powers are united together, there can be no public liberty.

After the bill became law, despite that opposition, I joined Senator BYRD and Senator Moynihan in filing an amicus brief at the Supreme Court, arguing that the line-item veto was an unconstitutional surrender of legislative power to the executive branch. In June 1998, the Supreme Court agreed in a 6 to 3 decision. Senator BYRD came to the Senate floor, and he declared that this is a great day for the United States of America, a great day for the Constitution of the United States. Moreover, he said that today we feel that the liberties of the American people have been assured. God save this honorable Court.

Well, we are honored to have this giant in the Senate—a true living legend—among us and guiding us in our daily work.

The determination with which Senator BYRD approaches his work in Washington is borne of his devotion to the people of West Virginia.

Through his arduous work he has brought needed infrastructure to an area that has lacked for economic development. He has fought, first and foremost, for the working people and particularly the coal miners of West Virginia. Just last week—I guess the week before now—the Senate passed the mine safety bill that he championed along with his colleague, Senator Rockefeller. West Virginia has had no finer advocate in its history than ROBERT BYRD, a fact the State recognized when it selected him “West Virginian of the 20th century.”

In addition to his service in the Senate, Senator BYRD has lived, and hopefully will continue to live for many years, an amazing and an amazingly full life. He is a man of great abilities and many passions. He plays the fiddle; he reads

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the classics; he is a master orator; he has worked as a butcher and welder; he is a writer and historian; he has lived in a shack with no electricity and now keeps the company of Presidents and of Kings.

He has known true and deep love with his cherished wife Erma whose birthday they would have celebrated today. His life and his love for the Senate and for the Constitution is exceeded only by his love for Erma.

When I was elected to the Senate in 1978, ROBERT BYRD was majority leader. The first vote I cast was on a Robert Byrd motion. And since that day, I have learned more about this institution from ROBERT BYRD than I have from anyone or from anywhere else. The greatest tribute we can pay to ROBERT BYRD is to stand firm for Senate procedures which have made the Senate the most notable place in the world of democratic institutions where the protection of minority rights to debate and to amend legislation are the most protected. There is no other place like the Senate in the world. It is here where the right to debate is given a privileged position, a protected position so that minority views can be aired fully and so that, hopefully, consensus can be arrived at rather than just simply adopted by prompt majority votes.

So that is the tribute we can all pay to ROBERT BYRD: to defend this institution, to stand for its procedures, and to carry, as he does, at least in our hearts, the Constitution, as he carries the Constitution on his body.

Congratulations to Senator BYRD on this historic milestone in his lifetime of service to our Nation and his now record length of service to the Senate of the United States.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am pleased to come to the floor today to pay my personal tribute and the tribute of all Georgians to the service of ROBERT BYRD in the U.S. Senate. Today, in his 47th year of service, he is the longest serving U.S. Senator in history.

I am distinctly honored to be in the Senate and to have been elected here, and there are many reasons why I am honored. But one of the most wonderful experiences since my election has been the chance to come to know ROBERT BYRD. He, obviously, is a legend. He, obviously, is a great orator. But he is also a wonderful human being.

On Fridays it is my occasion to preside over the U.S. Senate for 3 hours. As the other Members of the Senate know, on Friday mornings we are not always in business. Therefore, Friday is the day where a lot of Members come to make

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speeches about issues of importance to them and their constituents.

On occasion, I have had the chance to hear ROBERT BYRD make one of his famous Friday morning speeches, probably the most enjoyable of which took place three Fridays ago when I was presiding over the Senate. Senator BYRD arrived in the Chamber, asked for recognition, and then spoke, basically without notes, for 48 minutes. I remember counting the minutes. I did not want it to be over because he gave his famous Mother's Day speech. He paid tribute to his mom and all moms in the United States of America.

ROBERT BYRD is a wonderful, unique institution, a man of great honor, great intellect, and great capacity.

One of my other great experiences since coming to the Senate has been to work with him on the bill we recently passed and is now on the President's desk, the mine safety bill. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Occupational Safety, it fell to my lot to deal with the tragedies of the Sago mine disaster and subsequent disasters that took place in Kentucky.

Obviously, the Sago mine is in West Virginia, and I traveled to West Virginia and met with those mine families. But I also met with ROBERT BYRD on numerous occasions, talking about what we as the U.S. Senate could do to try to see to it that we reacted to where there might be shortcomings in the mine safety laws and to help institutionalize better practices not only in our inspections but in the operations of those mines.

With all the energy of a teenager, love and compassion for those widows, and with great effort on his own part, Senator BYRD worked closely with us over the last 6 months since that disaster, and a couple weeks ago we passed in this body—and the House passed 2 days later—the mine safety bill.

Today, mining is a safer profession because of ROBERT BYRD and his compassionate love for the people of West Virginia and the coal miners who work there.

I could go on and on telling personal stories, but I will not do that. I simply close by saying, of all the great distinctions and honors I have had to serve in this body, none is greater than to get to know the great man of great capacity and great compassion, the honorable ROBERT BYRD from the State of West Virginia—now the longest serving Senator in the history of the U.S. Senate.

(At the request of Mr. Reid, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the *Record*).

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Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, on January 3, 1959, ROBERT CARLYLE BYRD entered his first term as West Virginia's junior Senator. Today, June 12, 2006, after serving 17,327 days representing West Virginians, ROBERT C. BYRD is now the longest serving U.S. Senator in our Nation's great history. He has surpassed giants and legends of the Senate to be in a class by himself. Although his 47-plus years and 17,666 votes are what we celebrate today, we also know that he is just as much West Virginia's future as he has been part of its past.

During his tenure, Senator BYRD has brought over \$1 billion to West Virginia's highways, dams, educational institutions, and more—earning him the moniker of West Virginia's billion-dollar industry. Senator BYRD has also created a number of other health care and educational opportunities across the State such as the Robert C. Byrd Center for Rural Health, based at Marshall University; the Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center at West Virginia University; and the Scholastic Recognition Award for West Virginia's public and private school valedictorians. Senator BYRD's projects are so numerous it would take me hours to name them all; however, the improvements he has brought to West Virginia are immeasurable. And West Virginia's future is much brighter as a result of his years of service and his continued desire to work for our State.

His dedication to the people of West Virginia is unmatched, and in the years to come, we all look to Senator BYRD to continue to fight for a State that would have much less without him. Today he is working to secure a Federal prison in McDowell County, continuing to improve our State's highways, updating the safety laws for our miners, protecting the checks and balances in our government structure, securing our borders, and creating opportunities for the youth of West Virginia.

Sadly, this year, Senator BYRD lost a pillar of strength and the most beloved person in his life—his wife Erma Ora Byrd. When Senator BYRD earned his law degree while serving in Congress, Erma and his children sacrificed time with him for the betterment of our Nation. Erma served as a spiritual companion and as an emotional support for him. When elected as majority leader, many said that his life was the Senate, but those who know him know that the love of his life and his eternal companion truly was Erma. Her values and strengths are those of all West Virginians. She was a coal miner's daughter and a daughter of Appalachia. She pro-

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vided Senator BYRD with everything he needed throughout his life, and provided unfailing support during his lifetime of public service.

Senator BYRD's love for West Virginia and its people is extraordinary. Throughout his unprecedented public service in the West Virginia House of Delegates, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the U.S. Senate, ROBERT C. BYRD has never lost an election—a tribute to his resounding support in our State of West Virginia and something very few of his colleagues can say. One reason for this perfect record is that he never fails to work for the future of our State—he is on the cutting edge of West Virginia's needs, and he is fast to respond to new problems, such as border security, and homeland security, with new solutions.

Senator BYRD's contributions to this country extend far past West Virginia's mountains. He has served as a leader on the Senate Appropriations Committee, worked to create a Federal compensation system for black lung victims, worked to secure passage of the Panama Canal treaties, led the effort to pass legislation keeping the Social Security system solvent, worked to ratify the INF treaty with the Soviet Union, went to court to block the recently passed line-item veto, among many other historic pieces of legislation, treaties, nominations, and resolutions. Most recently, Senator BYRD has worked tirelessly to help pass the MINER Act in light of the tragedies at the Sago and Alma mines.

In addition to his stellar legislative record, Senator BYRD has been a proven leader in the Senate, holding more leadership positions in the Senate than any other Senator of any party in Senate history. He has held leadership positions including secretary of the Democratic Conference, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senate Democratic whip, Democratic leader, majority leader, and minority leader. On two occasions Senator ROBERT C. BYRD has served as President pro tempore of the Senate, demonstrating the tremendous amount of respect that the Senator has from his colleagues and placing him in direct line of succession to the Presidency.

Throughout his career, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD has remained a dedicated husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend. A man of deep faith, his dedication to our country and our State is exceeded only by his dedication to his family. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Senator ROBERT C. BYRD for the incredible amount of time and effort he has given to our Nation and to

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the State of West Virginia. I know my colleagues join me in hoping that he will continue to serve West Virginia for many more years to come.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I want to add my voice in tribute and recognition of the continuing service of our distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from West Virginia, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD. Today he becomes the real dean of the Senate, the longest serving of all the 1,885 men and women who have served in this body.

It will not surprise any of my colleagues that others will make more of this remarkable milestone than the Senator from West Virginia himself. For him, Day 17,327 is just another day serving the people of West Virginia and the United States here in the Senate. But for the rest of us, this milestone recognizes not simply the length of Senator BYRD's tenure, but what he has done with that tenure.

The Senator from West Virginia brings a sense of history and perspective to the politics of the moment. He is as determined as anyone here to achieve his political goals, but his emphasis on the institution's history and prerogatives helps us place the immediate in a larger context. In that sense, he is not just a Senator, not just a colleague, but he is a teacher for the many Senators who have walked on this floor for the first time since he came here so long ago.

The Senator from West Virginia is truly an original. I ask my colleagues: do you know anyone else who feels equally comfortable giving a discourse on the Roman Senate and appearing on the tv show "Hee Haw"?

Many Senators, for example, receive academic degrees during their service in this body. Most, however, are honorary degrees. The Senator from West Virginia received a law degree from American University in 1963, but he earned it after taking night classes for a decade.

Senators have written books during their service in this body. The Senator from West Virginia, however, has written books about this body. He is widely known as the author of a four-volume work on the history of the U.S. Senate, published in 1987 for the Senate's bicentennial. Those are not simply history books. The project began as a series of speeches about this institution and its history, delivered right here on this Senate floor—a book about Senate history arising while participating in that history.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Inside the front cover of volume two of his work on the Senate is a photograph of the Senator from West Virginia and his wife,

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whom he has so often simply called “my dear Erma,” standing on a staircase in the Senate. We all mourned Erma Byrd’s passing just a few months ago and today would have been her birthday. That photograph was on the occasion of their 50th anniversary in 1987. I do not doubt that in his left breast pocket was that familiar copy of the U.S. Constitution which, I might add, was celebrating its own bicentennial that same year. How fitting that one photograph would capture these loves of his life, the institutions to which he was so committed: his marriage, the Constitution, and the Senate.

So much more could be said, but I just want to pay tribute and honor to my colleague of nearly 30 years, a man of character and integrity, a caring man passionately devoted to his faith, his family, and his country, a good man, a great Senator.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Senate’s most enduring figure, Senator ROBERT BYRD of West Virginia. Today marks the day that Senator BYRD becomes the longest serving Member in the history of the U.S. Senate, with almost 50 years of senatorial experience. I extend to Senator BYRD my congratulations on this momentous occasion.

Born in 1917, Senator BYRD had a hardscrabble childhood. After the death of his parents when Senator BYRD was just 1 year old, he was raised by his aunt and uncle in various communities in West Virginia. He graduated at the top of his high school class in the 1930s, in the midst of the Great Depression. Taking work wherever he was able to find it, Senator BYRD pumped gas, sold produce, and cut meat. These jobs grounded Senator BYRD in the realities of the working world. During World War II, he became a welder and worked on the Liberty and Victory ships.

After the war, Senator BYRD began his political life with a successful run for the West Virginia House of Delegates. After serving two terms, Senator BYRD was elected to the West Virginia Senate, then to the U.S. House of Representatives. Finally, in 1958, Senator BYRD was elected to the U.S. Senate. He has subsequently been reelected by large margins again and again. In numerous elections, he has carried all 55 counties in West Virginia and in 2000 carried nearly every precinct in the State, an unheard of achievement. Additionally, Senator BYRD has held more positions in the Senate leadership than any other Senator in the history of the institution, including 12 years as Democratic leader.

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While outside of the Senate Chamber, Senator BYRD became the first Member to initiate and complete the courses needed for a law degree while simultaneously serving in Congress by taking night classes from American University over the course of 10 years. In May 2001, Senator BYRD was named “West Virginian of the 20th Century” by Governor Bob Wise and both houses of the West Virginia Legislature. He is also blessed with two daughters, six grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

I am pleased to recognize my colleague, Senator BYRD, on this historic day. The work he has done throughout his life has bestowed countless benefits to the people of West Virginia and to the Nation. It is a pleasure to work with such a creative and dedicated lawmaker, and I once again congratulate Senator BYRD on reaching this milestone.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate my longtime friend and colleague, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD, on his landmark accomplishment of becoming the longest serving Member of the U.S. Senate. Today is Senator BYRD’s 17,327th day in office—in his 47th year of service. And he is still going strong—gearing up for his race for a ninth term this fall.

Senator BYRD’s life shows the power of America’s unique opportunity structure. His mother died when he was a baby. He was raised by his aunt and by his uncle, who was a coal miner, during the Great Depression. In his early life, he worked pumping gas, cutting meat, and even welding war ships in various ports—including in my own hometown of Baltimore. Yet Senator BYRD never forgot his roots, and he never forgot those miners. In fact, his new mine safety legislation—the MINER Act—just passed the Senate last week. Like me, he stands up for the little guy.

Senator BYRD and I have a long history together. When I first came to the Senate in 1986, one of the people who was most welcoming to me was Senator BYRD. I reached out to him. I told him I not only wanted to be a fighter—I wanted to be an effective player. I wanted to be there not only to change the law books. I wanted to be sure there was money in the Federal checkbook for my State and for the national priorities that would help ordinary families. ROBERT BYRD said to me, “You should come on my Appropriations Committee.”

Senator BYRD helped me become the first woman on the Appropriations Committee and one of the first freshman Members of the Senate on the Appropriations Committee.

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With Senator BYRD as the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee and me as a member, we have been working together ever since to build coalitions to get things done.

Senator BYRD's home State of West Virginia is right next door to Maryland. We share a common border—with Allegany, Garrett, and parts of Washington Counties just across the State line in Western Maryland. But we share more than a common border. We share a common set of values—rooted in faith, family commitment and patriotism.

Senator BYRD is no stranger to breaking records. He has done this before. He has already cast more votes and held more leadership positions—including serving as minority leader for 6 years and serving two stints as President pro tempore—than any other U.S. Senator in history. Today's record is further evidence of Senator BYRD's unwavering dedication to his State. When asked about this accomplishment, Senator BYRD told the press:

Records are fine. But what's important is what I do for the people of West Virginia. They are the ones who sent me here 48 years ago.

It is this dedication that keeps the people of West Virginia voting for Senator BYRD. I like to say that I am the "Senator from Maryland and for Maryland," and it is this kind of shared value that makes me feel so close to Senator BYRD.

So today—June 12, 2006—we congratulate Senator ROBERT C. BYRD for his historic contributions to his State and to our Nation.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a longtime friend and colleague, the esteemed senior Senator from West Virginia, Senator ROBERT BYRD. This is a historic day in his career and a historic day in the history of the Senate. Today Senator BYRD adds to his many accomplishments and honors the distinction of becoming the longest serving Member in Senate history.

Senator BYRD's years of service to this country are an inspiration to all of us. His lifelong devotion to the institution of the Senate sets an example that we can only try to emulate. For almost half a century, he has been a tireless advocate for the people of West Virginia and the Nation. He believes that government can improve the lives of the citizens that it serves, and that we can all be advocates for justice. We are better Senators and better citizens when we attempt to live up to the legacy that he has established.

I first worked with Senator BYRD during the early days of my husband's administration. At the time, he had already

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served in the Senate for 34 years. I remember him being stately and silver-haired when we met. He was already the unofficial historian of the Senate, famous for standing in the well of the Chamber and dazzling his colleagues with quotations from the classics. I also learned then that he was a strict disciplinarian when it came to procedural rules and decorum, a quality that he retains to this day.

It is his devotion to the institution of the Senate that has made him a mentor to so many of us, and I am honored to include myself among the ranks of those whom he has counseled.

When I was elected to the Senate, it took me only a minute to conclude that I should start my preparation by going to see the great sage and historian of the Senate, Senator BYRD.

To this day I still very fondly remember the visit that I paid to Senator BYRD's office in the Capitol in late November 2000. I will be forever indebted to him for the guidance that he provided when I first came to the Senate.

Of course, I am not the only recipient of his kind advice and guidance. In fact, Senator BYRD has codified his vast knowledge of the history of the Senate into a multi-volume book. The four volumes published in 1989, 1991, 1993 and finally in 1995 were a labor of love for Senator BYRD. They will continue to be a resource and a treasure for many generations to come.

And let me tell you what Senator ROBERT BYRD did for the people of New York in the aftermath of the attack on lower Manhattan in 2001.

After that terrible day, the White House sent up a supplemental spending bill to finance the war, and there was not a single penny in it for New York. I told the President of the United States in the Oval Office that we were going to need at least \$20 billion to rebuild Ground Zero.

And thanks to the leadership and dedication of Senator BYRD, who chaired the Appropriations Committee at that time, we got that funding for New York. Thanks to his commitment, our firefighters, police officers, first responders, and volunteers who came to the rescue that day will have some help as they continue to cope with the health effects of exposure to the site.

Because of Senator BYRD's efforts, where once a pile of rubble stood, one day a tower will stand.

Because of Senator BYRD, our businesses and homeowners who lost everything are on the road to recovery.

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As Senator BYRD has himself said, New York gained a third Senator on that day, and we are unquestionably better off for it.

ROBERT BYRD was born in North Wilkesboro, NC, and raised in West Virginia by his aunt and uncle. He is an avid fiddler, steeped in the rich musical traditions of the Appalachian folk life. He grew up in the coal mining community that he proudly defends today. As a member of the HELP Committee, I continue to be impressed by his vigilance on behalf of the coal miners of West Virginia and elsewhere in the Nation.

He was first elected to this Senate in 1958. He became a member of the Senate leadership in 1967, when he was selected to be secretary of the Democratic Conference. He was chosen to be Senate Democratic whip in 1971 and Democratic leader in 1977. He has held more leadership positions in the Senate than any other Member in Senate history.

Through all of his years of Senate service, there was one person who was always by his side, as his partner, friend, and as he said on many occasions, his teacher.

Erma Ora James was born in Floyd County, VA, and moved from there to the coal mines of West Virginia with her family. It was there that she met ROBERT BYRD at Mark Twain High School over 70 years ago. He first tried to woo her with gifts of bubble gum that he took from a classmate and stored up for her. And apparently it worked, because they became high school sweethearts and were married on May 29, 1937. Over the years, their family grew to include two daughters, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

It is a tradition of Senator BYRD's to go to the floor of the Senate each Mother's Day and pay tribute to the Nation's mothers. When he does that he has often mentioned Erma and the joy that they shared together for so many years.

They had been married nearly 69 years when she passed away 3 months ago on March 15, 2006, after a long illness. Theirs has been called one of the great American love stories.

As his 63d wedding anniversary approached he went to the Senate floor and said of her:

I have to frankly say that what little I have amounted to, if it is anything much, I owe for the most part to [Erma].

I know that today, as his colleagues who respect and admire him so very much come to the floor to praise his service in the Senate, Erma is looking down on us as well.

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It is truly an honor to serve in the Senate with Senator BYRD. I wish him all the best on this day and I look forward to continuing our work together on behalf of the American people.

TUESDAY, *June 13, 2006*

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I would like to join all Senators, Democrats who yesterday spoke of Senator BYRD, I know many Republicans did as well. I, not being in town, wanted to take an occasion to salute Senator BYRD for a remarkable career in the Senate. I was touched recently by the recognition given to his wife, who recently passed away, in which Senator BYRD essentially said that this would be a bittersweet day for him in that he now is the recordholder for service in the Senate because Erma would not be here to share it with him. I know how much Senator BYRD values the Senate, but I think that comment of his, that reflection, was evidence that he values his marriage and family even more.

As a Republican Senator, I salute Senator BYRD for his remarkably long and distinguished career.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I want to congratulate Senator BYRD as well. What a wonderful gentleman. What a gentle spirit, but what a firm voice. We value your service and we appreciate what you can teach us and what you have taught us.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, on Monday, Senator ROBERT BYRD of West Virginia reached an extraordinary milestone: 17,327 days in the U.S. Senate, almost 48 years. He has cast over 17,000 roll call votes. His congressional career has spanned the tenure of 10 Presidents, beginning with President Dwight David Eisenhower. In West Virginia, he has run 14 times and never lost.

He has served nearly 60 years in both the House and the Senate and other public service. This year he is running for his unprecedented ninth term as a U.S. Senator from West Virginia. Suffice it to say, he is the longest serving Senator in the history of West Virginia, as he is in the history of the United States. He is the only person in West Virginia to carry every county in the State, all 55. He has run unop-

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posed for the Senate because of the regard, the respect, and, indeed, the affection of the people of West Virginia.

He is 88 years old. He is not slowing down, he has never slowed down, and he will keep it up. As a Member of the Senate, he has been a leader—Democratic whip, majority and minority leader, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and President pro tempore of the Senate on two occasions.

In everything he has done, he has been a champion of the Constitution and the people of West Virginia. He secured billions of dollars in funding for his home State, and he has been a leader on mine safety and other issues that are so closely tied to his constituents.

In May 2001, Senator BYRD was given the award that everyone recognizes is his due. Governor Bob Wise and both houses of the West Virginia General Assembly named him “West Virginian of the 20th Century,” and he is striving now for the 21st century.

He is an individual who is a self-made man, starting off in war industries in a shipyard, and earning his law degree cum laude from American University while a Member of the U.S. Congress. He is also someone who recognizes the need for education of others. He created the Robert C. Byrd National Honors Scholarship. This scholarship provides opportunities for young Americans to pursue education as he has pursued his education.

He is a historian—a historian of this Senate and the Roman Senate. In fact, his 3,000-page “History of the United States Senate” is the premier history of this august body. He is a defender, a supporter, and, in some cases, the living embodiment of the U.S. Constitution. He carries it with him everywhere and at all times. He is someone who not only talks about the Constitution, but on the floor of this Senate and in this country defends it each day.

He is an individual of great prominence. He is an individual of great humanity.

There is only one fact, I think, that is dimming this very special occasion for the Senator, and that is, it is not being shared by his beloved wife Erma Ora Byrd. But she is looking on this day with the same satisfaction, the same sense of accomplishment.

It is only fitting to close with a quote from Senator BYRD because I can in no way match his oratorical skills. In September 1998, he addressed the history of the Senate and he said:

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Clio being my favorite muse, let me begin this evening with a look backward over the well-traveled roads of history. History always turns our faces backward, and this is as it should be, so that we might be better informed and prepare to exercise wisdom in dealing with future events.

His grasp of the past has given him a wise and insightful view of the future. He has always encouraged us to learn our history and then practice our history to shape the future of this country in this Hall of the Senate.

He has stood tall on so many occasions, but most notably I think was in October 2002. With an iron will and articulate voice, he questioned the policy of this government as we entered this fight in Iraq.

History, I think, will record his wisdom, his decency, and his contribution to the country. Although I am a day late, I hope I am not a dollar short.

Congratulations to Senator BYRD on his model accomplishment.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I join our colleagues in the accolades and commendation for our colleague, the senior Senator from West Virginia. I believe there is no other Senator who commands the respect and the admiration and the love of fellow Senators as does Senator BYRD.

My first encounter with Senator BYRD I will never forget. Right over there at that desk, 5½ years ago, I rose to make my maiden speech in the Senate. In the course of that speech to a fairly empty Chamber of the Senate, I happened to mention that it was my maiden speech. In a few moments, suddenly the doors of the Senate flung open and in strode Senator BYRD. He sat down at his desk and listened very politely and patiently as I continued my first oration in this tremendous, most deliberative body. As I finished, Senator BYRD stood and said, "Would the Senator from Florida yield?" I said, of course, "I yield to the distinguished Senator from West Virginia." He proceeded to give a history of the Senate about maiden speeches. He told how, in the old days, when word would get out that a new Senator was going to give his first speech, all of the other Senators would gather around because they wanted to hear what the new Senator was saying. Of course, you can imagine what an impression this made on this new Senator 5½ years ago by not only the conscience of the Senate but the historian of the Senate, the keeper of the rules of the Senate, the distinguished Senator from West Virginia. And, of course, he passed a milestone yesterday. All of us are proud for him, and we are exception-

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ally proud for this institution, that it would have a Senator such as the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia.

I want the Senate to know that this Senator is very privileged that he has had the opportunity not only to call him a friend and colleague but that this Senator has had the opportunity to sit at his knee and try to soak up the wisdom of the years, the exceptional historical knowledge of this institution and the extraordinary knowledge of the history of planet Earth that the Senator brings to this Chamber.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to talk about a significant event that took place yesterday in the U.S. Senate, and that is the fact that we have now a new longest serving U.S. Senator in the history of our country. Senator BYRD nears the end of his eighth term here in the Senate but holds more than just another significant record. His contribution to our country has been almost beyond compare. He already holds Senate records for the most leadership positions held and for the most roll call votes cast, over 17,600 and still counting.

Starting in 1946, Senator BYRD has run in 14 elections for the West Virginia House of Delegates, the State senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the U.S. Senate. He inspires the envy of all of us because he has won all of these races, and I have no doubt that voters in West Virginia will reelect him to a ninth Senate term this fall. That is going to enable him in December 2009 to pass the record that Carl Hayden has as the longest serving Member of Congress in U.S. history. But BOB BYRD is not here merely to set and break records. He is here to serve the people of West Virginia and all Americans, and he has done so admirably.

Senator BYRD is a testament to the values of hard work and perseverance. Almost from the start, he has had a hard life, but he has triumphed. His mother died from the 1918 flu pandemic, when Senator BYRD was just an infant. His aunt and uncle raised him in the hardscrabble coalfields of West Virginia during the Great Depression. He was the valedictorian of his high school class, but he couldn't afford to go to college. After high school, Senator BYRD went to work. He pumped gas, sold produce, became a meat cutter and welder. During World War II, he helped to build Liberty and Victory ships in the Baltimore and Tampa shipyards.

Following the war, he began his career as an elected official, winning a seat in the House of Delegates in West Virginia. In 1952, he was elected to the first of three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1958, he was elected

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to the U.S. Senate. In his races since then, he has carried all 55 of West Virginia's counties. In the year 2000, he won all but 7 of West Virginia's 1,970 precincts. What a record. It is hard to find one that compares in any way to the allegiance that he has had from the constituents in West Virginia who not only send him back here but love him as their representative at the same time.

It just wasn't winning elections. Senator BYRD could have rested on his laurels, but that is not his style. His life and career have been a relentless pursuit of self-improvement. In 1963, after 10 years of taking classes at night, Senator BYRD earned his law degree cum laude from American University. He didn't have to do that because he wasn't going to become a lawyer, but he thought it would make him a better person and a better Senator.

Senator BYRD is a great example to all of us, but he is especially interesting for America's young people for three reasons. First, he is truly a self-made man. Nothing has been handed to him. He has earned it all. He knows what it is like to be poor, and he knows what it is like to do hard manual labor. That is why he has always been the working man's champion.

Second, he is always striving to learn more and do more. No other Senator can match his extensive knowledge on so many subjects or can recite so many passages from the Bible or from Roman history or from Shakespeare and other playwrights and poets. Senator BYRD isn't content merely to memorize what others have written. He literally wrote the book on the history of the U.S. Senate. No one can match his knowledge of Senate rules, precedents, and parliamentary procedure.

Finally, Senator BYRD is a shining example to all of us because of his steadfast commitment to principle, especially with regard to the role of a U.S. Senator. He has never wavered in his defense of our institution. All Americans are deeply indebted to him for that dedication and loyalty. At a time when the current administration is intent on usurping powers that the Founding Fathers reserved for Congress, we need Senator BYRD more than ever, his reminders to all of us about what is appropriate in terms of obeying the rules and the procedures we have adopted, but more importantly, the honor that this institution has developed over more than 200 years.

Senator BYRD has demonstrated that fearlessly standing on principle, even when it is unpopular, is the key to a suc-

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cessful political career and in life generally. His concern for his State and his constituents, and his ability to deliver for them, are legendary. But above all, Senator BYRD has stood up for the Constitution. He is what we refer to as a Senator's Senator. We are truly fortunate to have him here, and we are truly privileged to serve with him. He is also a wonderful colleague. He never forgets a birthday or other important occasion, never fails to remind us of the beauty of the seasons.

Yesterday his service here in the Senate reached 17,327 days, a record for which he can be appropriately proud. I know that day was bittersweet because it also marked the birthday of his beloved wife, Erma Ora James, his high school sweetheart, and a coal miner's daughter. We were all so sad when Erma passed away this past March, just 2 months shy of their 69th wedding anniversary. Their love for each other, their respect for each other, was an inspiration to every one of us.

Senator BYRD's record-setting day yesterday was tinged with some sorrow and reflection, but I hope he can take comfort in knowing that so many people here in the Senate and all across America hold him in such high regard.

I would like to borrow a page from Senator BYRD by quoting Shakespeare, who in "Twelfth Night" wrote:

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.

Senator BYRD has achieved greatness in the U.S. Senate. He achieved it through his tireless service to the people of West Virginia and his fearless defense of the Constitution of the United States of America. The Senate and the Nation are far better for his efforts. We wish him well, a continued ability to serve, and look forward to hearing from him when he talks about subjects that are so familiar to him and yet are so far removed from the typical daily thought that we run into.

Senator BYRD, when I first came here, invited me into his office. He delivered a treatise on the former rulers of Great Britain, the Kings of England. From memory, he recalled the length of their terms, how they died, and who succeeded each and every one of them. I sat there feeling like I was back in the university or even earlier than that, because he has this incredible memory of so many things, and he can relate them wonderfully.

I come out of the computer business. Until I got here and got to know BOB BYRD, I didn't realize that there was someone who has the knowledge, the database, the information

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that is very difficult to find in other than very large capacity computers.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I do want to talk for a minute about Senator BYRD and recognize he has set a record in the Senate, as many of my colleagues have noted on the floor.

He marked his 17,327th day in office yesterday and became the longest serving Senator in history. That is truly a remarkable accomplishment, and I personally have many fond memories of working with Senator BYRD and look forward to many more.

I remember well when I came here as a freshman Senator 13½ years ago. Senator BYRD at the time brought in all of us freshmen Senators to sit across from him in his very important office and looked down at us and told us that we would be presiding, as is the Presiding Officer today, and told us about our responsibilities and made it very clear he would be watching from his office, and if we were reading any other material or talking to anyone it would be noted.

I certainly did remember that during the many hours I spent in the Presiding Officer's chair because I knew he was watching. But I think it was a simple reminder to all of us as to the importance of the office we hold here and the respect we have to have for our colleagues.

I remember as well that he invited me to lunch several months later with the Senator from Oregon, Mr. Hatfield, a Republican, to sit down and talk with me about the responsibilities I had as a Senator. And I was so impressed sitting in the room with Senator BYRD and Senator Hatfield, never in my life expecting to have that kind of opportunity. And at that meeting they impressed upon me the importance of working across the aisle and respect for the minority and how important everybody's voice is here. It was an important lesson and one I think we all should be reminded of more often.

But just that simple act of inviting me to lunch with two incredible leaders in the Senate is a memory I hold dear, and I thank my colleague for doing that.

But, frankly, I think what I most will remember Senator BYRD for—and is a good reminder to all of us, too—is several years ago when my husband came out here to Washington, DC—he lives in Washington State. I go home every weekend. But he came out here because it was our wedding anniversary, and instead of me having to fly home, he flew out here.

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He was coming up the steps of the Capitol, and I met him as Senator BYRD was walking out to his car.

Senator BYRD saw my husband, and he said: Welcome. Nice to have you here at this end of the country. What brings you here?

And my husband said: Well, it is our wedding anniversary.

And Senator BYRD, who, as we well know, lost his beloved wife just a few short weeks ago, was about to celebrate I think it was his 67th wedding anniversary. He looked at my husband and said: Which anniversary is this?

And my husband said: It is our 32d.

Senator BYRD paused and said: Well, it is a good start.

I think the message of that is important for all of us in our everyday lives, in our responsibilities as spouses, and as Senators, to remember it is a good start every day, and you can't rest on your laurels and think back: Well, we have done this for 32 years. The next 32 will be easy. Every day you have to come out and work hard at whatever role you are in at the time.

I certainly say to my good friend, Senator BYRD, how much I respect and admire him. And today, as he marks his 17,328th day in office, I say to him: It is a good start.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Senator BYRD, a man I am honored to call colleague and friend.

Senator BYRD is a hero and a patriot—as noble and eloquent as the great Senators—from Cicero to Richard B. Russell—of whom he has taught us all so much. He is a living example of the great opportunity in America. He is a living tribute to the preeminence of our constitutional democracy.

Senator BYRD lives to serve the people of West Virginia who sent him here, just as he would die to protect the Constitution that guides his every step. It is his duty and joy to use his prodigious legislative skill for West Virginia, and it is West Virginians' great fortune to be represented by a man who knows and does his job so well.

Several years ago, Senator BYRD turned one of my worst days in the Senate into one of my best. It was the end of session, late in the evening, and I had lost a fierce battle over dairy policy. Most Senators were wandering out to make their planes, and Senator BYRD stood up. In ringing tones, he made a short speech about the battle I just lost. In part, he said: "He has stood up for the people of Wisconsin. That is what I like about him. He stands for principle. He stands for his people."

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No kinder words have been spoken about me in this Chamber—no accolade of which I am more proud. Senator BYRD, you too stand for principle. You stand for your people. And that's what I like about you.

I am not an orator like Senator BYRD, and I certainly don't have the words to say what his friendship has meant to me and what his stewardship has meant to this country. Let me instead borrow the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a poet Senator BYRD quotes often here on the floor and often from memory. I'm sure he knows this one, too:

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time

Senator BYRD is a great man. His dedication to duty, his love of country, and his devotion to his family are examples to us all. He leaves footprints in the very soil of this Nation that have and will continue to shape—for the better—who we are. I am grateful for his friendship and honored to serve with him.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise to add my voice to the chorus of praise for an extraordinary Member of this institution—my dear friend from West Virginia, Senator ROBERT BYRD.

What a pleasure it has been to serve with Senator BYRD.

I am constantly inspired by his grace—his brilliance—and his unmatched work ethic.

We honor Senator BYRD for reaching the milestone of longest serving Senator in history—8 terms—nearly 48 years—and 17,666 votes.

These are stunning numbers, but this legend is much more than the Cal Ripken, Jr., of the Senate.

Longevity is only part of the story. We know him best for his intellect, his devotion to the people of West Virginia, and his reverence for the institution of the Senate; for keeping a copy of the Constitution in his breast pocket—next to his heart—at all times, not for symbolism but for constant counsel, for having served beside numerous Presidents—both Democrat and Republican; for standing with them when their cause is just—yet never backing down from a fight with any President when he believes important principles are at stake, particularly when our role as a co-equal branch of government is threatened.

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And that is what I admire most about Senator BYRD: He always stands on principle and fights for what he believes, no matter what the odds.

What an inspiration this has been to me and to so many of us.

What an inspiration—his love of this country, his integrity, his absolute dedication to honest and principled government.

And what an inspiration—his 68-year partnership with his wife Erma—whom I know he misses dearly—and whom I know is looking down on him today with tremendous pride and love.

And it is for these reasons—far more than for his longevity—that we honor him today.

But anyone who knows Senator BYRD realizes that these words of praise are not sought because, despite his well-earned title of Senate Historian—Senator BYRD is not one to dwell on the past. He is a forward thinker.

For him, this special day is really just another day at the office.

Because as ROBERT BYRD knows best of all—there are crucial issues to debate. Problems to solve. And many more votes to be cast.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my friend and colleague ROBERT BYRD, who yesterday officially became the longest serving Member in the history of the Senate.

As of June 12, 2006, Senator BYRD had officially served West Virginia in the Senate for 17,327 days. That is an astounding 47½ years since he took office on January 3, 1959. It was a time when a postage stamp cost \$0.04, gasoline was \$0.25 per gallon, and you could buy a brand new Ford car for a little over \$2,100.

Senator BYRD has served through 10 Presidencies, statehood for Alaska and Hawaii, wartime and peacetime, surplus and deficit, the dawn of space travel and the advent of the Information Age. And, as I stand here today, I have to chuckle at the fact that when I was just beginning the first grade, Senator BYRD was already serving his second term in the Senate.

However, the indelible mark he has left on this institution has more to do with the quality of his service than the length of his service. Senator BYRD has a deep love for his beloved home State of West Virginia, for the institution of the U.S. Senate, and for our country. Always ready with a copy of the Constitution in his pocket, Senator BYRD under-

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stands just how sacred this document truly is, and he fights every day to protect it.

He literally wrote the book on the rules and traditions of the Senate, and he teaches by example, offering the kind of eloquent, principled debate that has historically filled this Chamber. His speeches are honest and heartfelt, with a Shakespearean rhythm, peppered with stories from his boyhood in the coalfields of Appalachia. He is never shy about scolding colleagues when they put politics before principles or when they violate the practices of this great institution.

And yet he also exemplifies the cordial tradition of the Senate, disagreeing without being disagreeable, and always willing to offer a handshake to a political opponent at the end of a hard-fought debate. He is a man of integrity, who has demonstrated that an honest search for truth can lead to a principled change of heart and a desire to seek justice for all.

I know this remarkable accomplishment is a bittersweet one, since Senator BYRD is not able to share it with his beloved wife Erma, who passed away in March. Yesterday, the day on which Senator BYRD set this record, was also Erma's birthday. It is fitting that he marks this milestone on the same day he celebrates Erma's life, because he has often credited Erma's unconditional love and support with sustaining him through his years of service.

When asked last week about achieving this milestone, Senator BYRD replied that "records are fine, but what's important is what I do for the people of West Virginia." That humble devotion to the people he serves is what brought ROBERT BYRD to the Senate more than 47 years ago, and it is what continues to drive him each and every day.

After I was sworn in last January, one of the first Senators I met with was Senator BYRD. We sat down in his hideaway on the first floor of the Capitol. After we posed for a few photographs, I inquired after his wife, who I had heard had taken a turn for the worse, and asked about some of the figures in the many photos that lined the walls. Eventually I asked him what advice he would give me as a new Member of the Senate.

"Learn the rules," Senator BYRD said. "Not just the rules but the precedents as well." He pointed to a series of thick binders behind him, each one affixed with a hand-written label. "Not many people bother to learn them these days. Everything is so rushed, so many demands on a Senator's time.

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But these rules unlock the power of the Senate. They're the keys to the kingdom."

We spoke about the Senate's past, the Presidents he had known, the bills he had managed. He told me too many Senators today became quickly fixated on reaching the White House, not understanding that in the constitutional design it was the Senate that was supreme, the heart and soul of the Republic.

"So few people read the Constitution today," Senator BYRD said, pulling out a pocket copy from his breast pocket. "I've always said this document and the Holy Bible, they've been all the guidance I need."

On many occasions over the past year and a half, I have remembered these wise words as I have performed my duties in the Senate.

I am proud to call ROBERT BYRD a colleague, a friend, and a mentor. I congratulate him on this remarkable achievement and wish him all the best for many more years of service to our country.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to my friend and colleague, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD, who today, on his 17,328th day in office, becomes the longest serving Member of the Senate.

As I thought about Senator BYRD's remarkable career, I wondered: What can I say that would properly honor his long labors in service to this Senate and this Nation?

I decided to look back in history, the history that Senator BYRD has quoted time and again, and seek the advice of other Senators known for their oratory. And while many great speakers have blessed the U.S. Senate over its history, including Senator BYRD, I found wisdom in the advice of the great Roman Senator and orator, Cato the Elder.

He said: "*Rem tene; verba sequentur.*" "Grasp the subject, the words will follow."

So I sat back and thought about Senator BYRD, both over his long career that I have read about, and the 18 years I have been privileged to work with him as a colleague.

A lot of thoughts came to mind.

Warm. Courteous. Kind.

Hardworking. Humble. Humorous.

Both well read and an accomplished author well worth reading.

But none of these were quite right. I still hadn't grasped the subject.

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Then an image hit me, the image of Senator BYRD reaching into his coat pocket for that copy of the Constitution he always keeps by his heart.

That was it. I knew I had grasped my subject.

Time after time, Senator BYRD has taken this floor to remind us we have duties beyond our parties, beyond our passions, beyond our personal philosophies.

Our overwhelming duty is to our Nation's Constitution and the unique responsibilities it assigns each House of the legislative branch.

In particular, Senator BYRD constantly reminds us that our duty as Senators is to be the more deliberative of the two legislative bodies as the Framers envisioned this Chamber to be. Federalist No. 62 says the Senate should be a body that does not "yield to the impulse of sudden and violent passions" or be "seduced into pernicious resolutions."

So I thought about the history of this Senate. And I would like to reflect on the very first Senator, William Maclay of Pennsylvania, because his spirit is alive today in Senator BYRD. Senator Maclay became known among his colleagues as a stickler for following the Constitution, which sometimes put him at odds with those same colleagues. He also kept a meticulous diary of the proceedings of that first Senate.

One of the earliest debates in the first Senate was over what to call George Washington. It is hard to imagine now, but there were many back then who thought that "President of the United States" was not a fitting title, that something grander was needed.

A title committee was appointed in the Senate to consider titles such as, Your Elective Highness, and His Highness, the President of the United States and Protector of the Rights of the Same.

And those were some of the more modest proposals. The Senate also thought about giving special, nobility-style titles to members of the executive branch.

Senator Maclay found this absurd and in violation of the Constitution. He waited for someone else to speak out. But when no one else did, the very first Senator of the very first Senate rose and said:

Mr. President, the Constitution of the United States has designated our chief magistrate by the appellation of President of the United States of America. This is his title of office. We cannot alter, add to, or diminish it without infringing on the Constitution. As to grades of order or nobility, nothing of the kind can be established by Congress.

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In his diary, Maclay was even more biting about attempts to establish lofty titles because he thought they violated both the letter and the spirit of the Constitution.

He wrote:

Never will I consent to straining the Constitution, nor will I consent to the exercise of doubtful power. We come here the servants, not the lords, of our constituents.

Now does that sound like anybody we know?

Looking toward the future, Senator Maclay went on to write:

The new government, instead of being a powerful machine whose authority would support any measure, needs help ... and must be supported by the ablest names and most shining characters which we can select.

I believe everyone here agrees that Senator BYRD embodies the “shining character” and dedication to the Constitution that the first Senator of the first Senate thought would be crucial to the new Nation’s success.

I also believe Senator BYRD has done so by following the advice of that ancient Roman Senator who he has quoted so often, Cato the Elder. Senator BYRD has truly grasped his subject—the Constitution—and the words have followed for nearly half a century.

I hope his words will continue to enlighten this Senate and this Nation for years to come.

Senator BYRD, thank you.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, the Book of Proverbs says: “The silver-haired head is a crown of glory.”

Today, the crown of glory rests upon the silver-haired head of our dear friend and colleague, ROBERT C. BYRD, for yesterday he became the longest serving Senator in the history of the Senate.

Senator BYRD has served in the Senate since January 3, 1959. That is longer than there have been 50 States in the Union. That was before Charles de Gaulle was President of France. That was before NASA had astronauts.

Senator BYRD has served as Senator during the terms of 10 Presidents, 9 majority leaders, and 8 Speakers of the House of Representatives.

For 12 years, Senator BYRD served as the leader of Senate Democrats. He served as majority leader, minority leader, and then majority leader again.

Senator BYRD has served as the Senate’s historian, elder statesman, and conscience.

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Senator BYRD has zealously defended the power of the purse. Senator BYRD has zealously defended the Senate. And Senator BYRD has zealously defended the Constitution of the United States.

But notwithstanding his having held the high rank of Senator for longer than any human being, Senator BYRD has never forgotten whence he came.

Senator ROBERT C. BYRD grew up in the bituminous coalfields of West Virginia, graduated from high school in the depths of the Great Depression, and worked pumping gas, selling produce, cutting meat, and welding ships. Even though Senator BYRD reached the zenith of power, Senator BYRD has always remained a man of the people.

Senator ROBERT C. BYRD is an assiduous pursuer of knowledge, a tenacious friend, and a man of deep, abiding faith.

Now Senator BYRD surpasses in length of service the likes of Strom Thurmond, Carl Hayden, John Stennis, Russell Long, and Richard Russell. And now Senator BYRD stands in quality of service with the likes of Daniel Webster, John Calhoun, Henry Clay, Robert La Follette, and Robert Wagner.

I thank Almighty God that for more than 47 years, Americans have been able to call him "Senator." I thank God that for more than 27 of those years, I have been blessed to serve here with him. And I thank God that for more than 27 years, I have been blessed to call him "friend."

WEDNESDAY, *June 14, 2006*

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to take a minute or two, if I can, to join my other colleagues who over the last several days have paid tribute to our colleague from West Virginia, my seatmate, Senator ROBERT BYRD, who, on Monday, celebrated the unique landmark of serving longer than any other person in the history of this remarkable institution.

I said to Senator BYRD, my colleague and seatmate, yesterday, his longevity is impressive but his record as a U.S. Senator is really what excels. While serving for 47 years in this institution is certainly remarkable, what he has done during those 47 years is what is truly remarkable. His contribution to the public discourse and debate of our country throughout that time has been truly exemplary.

I noted the other day, in fact, that when Senator BYRD was first elected to the House, there was a wonderful picture

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taken that appeared with Senator BYRD and several other Members of newly minted Congressmen who had been elected in 1952 at the White House with Dwight Eisenhower. In that group of pictures was also a newly minted Congressman from Connecticut by the name of Thomas Dodd, my father.

Senator BYRD and my father were elected to the House together in 1952, and came to this body together in 1959. So during these many years of public service, ROBERT C. BYRD has had to serve with two Dodds in the U.S. Congress, my father and myself. I sit next to Senator BYRD by choice. I have been his seatmate for almost 15 or 16 years now, and do so because I have enjoyed his company, his wisdom, and listening to his contributions to the debate and his knowledge of the Senate and its procedures.

I know we have a new group of pages who have arrived to serve in our Nation's Capital here in the U.S. Senate in the last few days. As someone who sat on the steps of the Democratic side back in the early 1960s as a page, I say to the pages, I would strongly urge you to listen to ROBERT C. BYRD. If you want to have truly a great lesson during your tenure here as pages, then listen to the remarkable Senator from West Virginia, and you will learn more in the short period of time you are here than almost anything else I could advise you to do, except to read his two-volume history of the U.S. Senate, which you may not have time to do during your 2 or 3 weeks here as pages.

Senator BYRD, of course, has had significant accomplishments. And I think of the time when I served as a page, an unpaid page, back many years ago, and the giants of the Senate in those days; certainly people such as Lyndon Johnson, Mike Mansfield, Richard Russell, Everett Dirksen, Margaret Chase Smith, Hubert Humphrey, John Sherman Cooper, Stuart Symington—and so many others who served during those years who were truly giants in many ways.

They were Senators in the very fullest sense of the word. They represented an institutional spirit that in many ways is lacking today, and I regret that deeply. But it was critical to the success of our democratic republic how they related one to the other. It is a spirit of independence and understanding that all Senators are equal in this body, regardless of the positions they hold in the institution. All 100 of us are equal Members representing our respective States and constituencies. It is a spirit that allows us to debate—sometimes very vigorously—our differences, while still obliging us to seek common ground for the common good of our country.

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ROBERT BYRD certainly epitomizes that spirit—a vigorous debater but also someone who recognizes it is vitally important to reach common goals for the common good. It is a spirit that refuses to submit to the encroachments of any other institution or office in the land, including that of the Executive.

I cannot count the times that ROBERT C. BYRD would correct someone who said: I served under a President here. I served under seven Presidents. ROBERT BYRD will quickly tell you: You do not serve under any President. You serve with Presidents. You are a member of a co-equal branch of the U.S. Government as embodied in the Constitution of the United States.

And how right he is. As Senators understand, ROBERT BYRD understands implicitly that the Senate is a co-equal, powerful branch of government, that our Founders wanted it to be of equal weight in the deliberations of our country.

I carry with me a copy of the U.S. Constitution. I have had this for many, many years, and it was given to me by my seatmate, ROBERT C. BYRD. It is getting rather worn, but his inscription inside is something I will cherish for the rest of my days and life. One of the reasons I care so deeply about this particular copy is of course it was given to me by him and inscribed by him.

I think it is only fitting that someone who cares so much about that document and this institution is now the Senate's longest serving Member.

In his close to five decades of Senate service, Senator BYRD has had an enormous impact on his State and on our country. He, more than any other Member that I can think of in the last half century, has worked to preserve the delicate system of checks and balances conceived by the Founders of our great Republic. That work is typified by his opposition to the line-item veto and his insistence on preserving the prerogatives of this institution in relation to the other branches of government.

But more than that, he has also helped to bring good jobs, better schools, and decent health care not only to the constituents of West Virginia but also to millions of people across this country because of his leadership.

He has never forgotten the good, hard-working people who sent him here from his beloved West Virginia or why they did so; that is, to make our Nation a stronger, more prosperous, and more hopeful Nation for all of its citizens.

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Senator BYRD has had the courage and strength of character to admit past errors—something that too few of us do in this Chamber—and to seek genuine understanding for the good of our country.

In his history of the U.S. Senate, Senator BYRD has written that:

After 200 years, the Senate is still the anchor of the Republic, is still the morning and evening star in the American constitutional constellation.

More than any other U.S. Senator in this body, I believe Senator BYRD has helped to ensure that this U.S. Senate retains that unique distinction.

So I am pleased to join with my other colleagues in wishing him well. I know more than anything else he would have loved to have his beloved Erma here with him in these days to celebrate this achievement. Of course, he lost Erma just a few months ago. But I am certain, as all of us are, that she is watching, with a great big smile, as she celebrates with all of us the distinction that our colleague from West Virginia has achieved this past Monday—47-plus years in the U.S. Senate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia, our friend ROBERT BYRD, has achieved yet another historic milestone. He is now the longest serving Senator in the history of the Senate. But what is most remarkable about Senator BYRD is not his longevity, but his unique stature and accomplishment within this body.

Senator BYRD is renowned for his unmatched knowledge of the Senate's history. So he remembers very well that our former colleague, Philip Hart of Michigan, was known as the "conscience of the Senate." Well, I believe that history will remember the senior Senator from West Virginia as the soul of the Senate.

No individual in my memory has been a more tenacious champion of the traditions, prerogatives, and rules of this body. No individual has had greater reverence for the Constitution, and for the Founders' vision of an assertive, independent, co-equal legislative branch. As the "Almanac of Americans" says in its profile of Senator BYRD, and I quote, he "may come closer to the kind of Senator that the Founding Fathers had in mind than any other." By the way, if anyone here on the Senate floor needs to look something up in the Constitution, we know where to turn; Senator BYRD al-

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ways carries a copy in his left breast pocket, directly over his heart.

I have always had a special affinity for Senator BYRD, because we are both the sons of coal miners, both raised in humble circumstances. Reading about the Senator's early years, lifting himself out of poverty as a welder and meat cutter before running for the West Virginia Legislature in 1946, I am reminded of Thomas Edison's remark that "opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." Well, ROBERT BYRD made his own opportunities with relentless work, self-education, and striving. And that incredible work ethic continues right up to this day.

One product of that work ethic, and of Senator BYRD's always impressive erudition, is his history of this body. It is recognized as the definitive history of the Senate during its first 200 years, and widely praised for its graceful writing. On this score, Senator BYRD has much in common with Winston Churchill. Both were prolific writers. And both were major players in the events that they chronicled.

On a personal note, let me just say that I have always valued Senator BYRD's friendship, wisdom, and advice. And I will always appreciate the way he tutored me in the ways of the Senate when I first came to this body in 1984.

So I join with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle in saluting our friend. Senator BYRD is the longest serving Member of this body. But there are still many chapters yet to be written in the career of this great Senator. As the late Senator Paul Wellstone used to say, "The future belongs to those with passion." By that standard, Senator BYRD is very much a man of the future.

I say to my friend, it has been an honor to serve with him.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a man who may be the most important friend that the people of West Virginia have ever sent to Washington or ever will send to Washington. He is the senior Senator of West Virginia, and today he becomes America's senior Senator.

The Senate is housed in this beautiful Chamber of marble columns and intricate architecture. But the Senate is not a building; it is not a seal or a symbol or an idea. The Senate is a group of 100 men and women who are chosen by the people to craft the laws that define and govern the American people.

While the Senate is not a building, it does have individuals who serve as pillars upon which the rest of us place our trust

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and reliance. Today, we salute one such pillar. The senior Senator from West Virginia enters the record books as the longest serving Senator.

Note, I say that he enters the record books, not the history books. I say that because I expect the senior Senator from West Virginia to be making history on this floor for many years to come.

In an earlier time, we would have called ROBERT BYRD a renaissance man in the mold of such American luminaries as Jefferson or Franklin. Consider that he is a poet, an accomplished musician, an author, the foremost historian of this Chamber, a parliamentary expert, an intensely devout Christian, an unrivaled legislator, a scholar of our Constitution, and earned a J.D. while a Member of this Chamber.

Yet all of these accomplishments as an individual are dwarfed by what he has done and will continue to do for the people of West Virginia. He has brought new industries like biotechnology, biometrics and other high-tech, high-skilled work to West Virginia. He has fought for dams, roadways, hospitals, and highways. It is hard to imagine that one man might have such a transformative impact on a State. Yet friend and foe alike would concede this point to ROBERT BYRD.

I say today that Senator BYRD becomes America's senior Senator. In many ways, he always has been. No man or woman more rigorously defends the role of this Chamber in our governmental structure, and no man or woman fights more ardently to preserve that beautiful document he carries in his breast pocket—the U.S. Constitution. One of the first things I did when I was sworn in as a Member of this body was to take the whole Landrieu family to see Senator BYRD and have him give us a talk on the Constitution and the role of the Senate.

For the last 6 years, it has been my pleasure to serve under Senator BYRD's leadership on the Senate Appropriations Committee. In that capacity, he has proven repeatedly that he is a friend to the people of Louisiana and understands the tragedy that has befallen them. I thank him for that help and friendship.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that today is a bittersweet anniversary, for it is also Erma's birthday. A woman whose life, and now memory, Senator BYRD so obviously cherished.

So, Mr. President, I thank America's senior Senator for his service to this country and for his friendship.

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I conclude my remarks, as he so often does, with a verse of poetry—one of the Senator’s favorites—the final verse of “The Building of the Ship” by Longfellow:

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
’Tis of the wave and not the rock;
’Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!
In spite of rock and tempest’s roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o’er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!

AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT TRIBUTES TO SENATOR ROBERT C.
BYRD AND FORMER SENATOR BOB DOLE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators be permitted to submit tributes to Senator BYRD and former Senator Dole for the *Record* until Friday, June 16, and that each be printed as a Senate document.

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

THURSDAY, *June 15, 2006*

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, earlier in the week, on Monday to be exact, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD, our very distinguished colleague, became the longest serving Senator in the history of the U.S. Senate. It is obviously a moment to celebrate and recognize his accomplishments in the service of the Nation. Our celebration is tempered only by the fact that his beloved wife Erma, with whom he spent nearly 69 years of marriage, passed away recently.

I want to join my colleagues who, in the course of this week, have paid tribute to the senior Senator from West Virginia. Senator BYRD this year completes his eighth Senate term, having first been elected to the Senate in 1958. Prior to that, he served 6 years in the U.S. House of Representatives and, before that, 6 years in the West Virginia Legislature.

In his now almost 48 years in the U.S. Senate, he has held an extraordinary range of committee and subcommittee assignments and has served in leadership positions as secretary of the majority conference, majority whip, minority leader, majority leader, and President pro tempore. His vote has been recorded on nearly 99 percent of all Senate roll calls since 1959. Indeed, he has cast far more votes than any other Senator in our Nation's history.

It is not for his longevity, however, that we honor our colleague, the senior Senator from West Virginia. It is, rather, the manner in which he has faithfully carried out his responsibilities as a U.S. Senator and his abiding dedication to the Constitution of the United States and the system of government it created. No Member of the U.S. Congress understands better than Senator BYRD the Constitution's role in framing our lives as Americans. As he has written:

Only the Constitution's genius affords our people the powers and prerogatives that truly keep us a free nation, most centrally through maintenance of the checks and balances and separation of powers.

Over many years, while vigorously and effectively representing the people of West Virginia, Senator BYRD has made the study, exposition, and defense of the Constitution his life's work. In so doing, he has spoken not only for West Virginians but for us all. If, as Senator BYRD has said, the Senate functions as the central pillar of our constitutional system, then I would say that Senator BYRD himself is the central pillar of the Senate. His commitment to the Senate and its history, its custom, and procedures is equaled only by his commitment to the State of West Virginia, our Nation, and our Constitution.

No one is more keenly attuned to the Senate's role in assuring the proper functioning of our constitutional system. He has studied the Senate's origins in Roman and British history. He has, as he puts it, "ponder[ed] the lives of the framers and founders and set down a four-volume history of the Senate." And he has read the journals and other writings of the early Members of this body. He has mastered the Senate rules to a degree that few, if any, have ever attained.

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Even in the most contentious debates, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD remains a steady voice for courtesy and civility. Indeed, his is the voice of courtesy and civility.

Senator BYRD begins his autobiography, "Child of the Appalachian Coalfields," with an observation by William James: "The best use of life is to invest it in something which will outlast life."

This certainly is what he has done.

It was not foreordained that he would some day be a U.S. Senator from West Virginia. Born in North Carolina, he lost his mother in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, when he was a year old, whereupon he was adopted by an aunt and her husband and moved with them to West Virginia. His adopted father was a coal miner, and he grew up in company towns. He was an excellent student, valedictorian of his high school class, "a self-styled sort of somebody," one high school teacher later said, but his prospects were few. As another teacher observed:

Knowing the background and how hard it would be to move out from that background, I picture him as being an office man or a scrip clerk at one of the mines.

In those years of the Great Depression, there was obviously no money for college. ROBERT BYRD took what jobs he could get: shop clerk, butcher, a welder in a Baltimore shipyard during World War II. We were honored to have had him in our State.

In 1946 he was elected to the first of three terms in the State legislature. Of the decision to run for office he has said:

I grew up in a state where we didn't have much hope. I wanted to help my people and give them hope . . .

He did not abandon his hopes of continuing his education. Upon his election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1952, he enrolled in law school. When he learned that he would be denied a law degree because he had never received a college degree in the law school in which he had enrolled, he transferred to the Washington College of Law at American University where he went to night classes for 10 years and received his law degree cum laude in 1963—a remarkable achievement. By that time he had been a Senator from West Virginia for 5 years. ROBERT BYRD is the only person ever to have served in either House of Congress to begin and complete a law degree while serving.

Twenty years later, the College of Law at American University honored him as the First Distinguished Fellow of the

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honor society established by the late dean of the college, a most fitting tribute. Eleven years later, in 1994, he received his bachelor's degree in political science from Marshall University in recognition of the credits accumulated there and other places over a period of many years.

Of the many awards he has received in the course of his long and distinguished career, Senator BYRD has said that none means more to him than the tribute from the Governor and legislature of his State in naming him "West Virginian of the 20th Century."

As his colleague here in the Senate for the past 30 years and as one who has the deepest respect and admiration for him and cherishes his counsel and friendship, I submit that he will be remembered not only for his service to his State but for the courage and dedication and tenacity he has shown and continues to show every day in the service of our Nation. It is a privilege to be his colleague here in the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, it is indeed a privilege and honor for me to join my colleagues in commemorating and honoring my friend and colleague, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD, on the occasion of his becoming the longest serving Senator in the history of our country, passing the old mark of 17,326 days on June 12, 2006. The fact that West Virginians have returned him to the Senate in eight prior elections speaks volumes of the love and affection and respect they feel for him as their Senator who serves them most effectively.

When I first came to the Senate in 1990 from the other side of the Capitol, Senator BYRD was one of the first Senators I met with to get advice and counsel, which he generously shared with me. Of course, he gave me a copy of a pocket edition of the Constitution, the document upon which our country is based and one that is ever-present in his pocket. Over the years, he has been most generous with his friendships, and indeed I feel a sense of kinship and *aloha* with him. In Hawaii, this feeling of kinship is often referred to as being part of the *ohana*, or family, and used with love and endearment.

With stewards like Senator ROBERT C. BYRD, we can rest assured that our country is in good hands. I look forward to

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his continuing friendship and serving with him for many years to come.

FRIDAY, *June 16, 2006*

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to congratulate my friend, the distinguished Senator from West Virginia, who has achieved the distinction of being the longest serving Senator in the history of the Senate. Even though this is definitely a noteworthy achievement, what has set Senator BYRD apart from all others who have served as Senators is the dedication he has shown to the duties of his office, his respect for the traditions of the Senate, and his leadership of this body during his service in the Senate.

As President pro tempore, majority leader, and chairman of the Appropriations Committee, he has succeeded in protecting and enforcing the rules of the Senate, first written by Thomas Jefferson during his service as Vice President and the Presiding Officer of the Senate, and he used his leadership skills to successfully lead the Senate in changing the rules when a consensus for modernizing the rules permitted. His insights into the needs of his constituents and his devotion to their well-being have been admirable.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to our understanding of the Senate was his authorship of the "Addresses on the History of the United States Senate," the most comprehensive account of the role the Senate has played over the years.

I commend the Senator from West Virginia for his illustrious and record-breaking career in the Senate, and I wish for him many more years of service in this body.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr President, I am sorry that I was not present on the floor on Monday when my colleagues paid tribute to my friend, ROBERT C. BYRD, but I would like to add my voice to the chorus speaking on his unsurpassed contributions to the U.S. Senate and to America.

I say without hesitation Senator BYRD is one of the most remarkable men I have ever had the privilege to work with. Although I have been here for 33 years, he is the only Member whom I have looked up to as my senior—my senior in every way.

When my days are finished in this Chamber, my children, my grandchildren, and my great-grandchildren will know

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that I served with the greatest servant of the U.S. Senate of all who have served.

Once someone said of another West Virginian, Stonewall Jackson, that "his character and will make him a stonewall and more of a stonewall than any man I've ever known."

I say the same of ROBERT BYRD. When he walks on the floor, Constitution in his pocket, and he looks around, raises his voice, and points his finger, he is our stonewall. He is the unshakable rock of this institution. He is our foundation. He is the protector of this body.

I am absolutely certain that the Senator's service, knowledge, and contributions to the Senate will never be surpassed. This country gentleman has no peer. No one has given as much to this institution or loved it as much as the senior Senator from West Virginia.

The Senate is what it is because of ROBERT BYRD. And he is our wise senior, not because of the records but because he is a man of his conviction. He has told the truth on every issue that confronts our country. He is our rock of integrity.

When I was elected at age 29, and 6 weeks later, before I was sworn in, my wife and daughter were killed in a terrible car accident, Senator BYRD came to the funeral home. He waited in a long line to pay his respects. It was an act of kindness that I have never forgotten.

I know how bittersweet this honor is for him, as his lifemate, Erma, would have been 89 years old this week. We all admire the love and devotion the two of them had for each other, in health and in sickness. We know his first love was not in the Chamber; it was at home. We also know how proud she would be of him this week.

One of America's favorite West Virginians, who also set a lot of records in his day, is Mr. Clutch, Jerry West. He once said: "You can't get much done in life if you only work on the days when you feel good."

Senator BYRD has worked 17,331 days—days that have been good and bad. In all that time, he has made the most out of every one of them and gotten more done than anyone will ever know. It has been an honor serving with him for 12,209 of those days. I look forward to many more days and years together.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in paying tribute to one of our most distinguished Members, the senior Senator from West Virginia, Mr. BYRD.

As he passes the milestone of becoming the Senate's longest serving Member, I would remind him of a statement by

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Yogi Berra when they asked him about one of his many records. He said, "I knew that one would stand until it was broken." Perhaps when medical science allows us to live to be 150 years old his record may be broken, but until then, I think he is safe.

Knowing the Senator's affection for the simple truth, I just want to make three points in recognizing this achievement which he embodies to an extraordinary degree.

The first is: Your life is what you make it.

Our former colleague, Senator Dave Durenberger told me the story of a Friday afternoon in the Senate in 1987 when he was standing in for Senator Dole for the procedural "wrap up" with Senator BYRD. The Twins were in the World Series at the time and on the *Record*, Senator Durenberger asked Senator BYRD if he wanted to come to Minnesota to see one of the games.

Senator BYRD said he has not seen a professional baseball game, or football game, or Hollywood movie for more than a decade. But he said he had not been idle. He shared that he had read the Bible cover to cover many times, had read all the plays of Shakespeare, all the Lives of Plutarch and the entire Oxford Unabridged Dictionary.

Many of us wonder what we might accomplish without the many distractions of modern life. We should look to Senator BYRD for the answer.

The second point I would like to make is: People change.

When we look at ROBERT BYRD's upbringing and the person he has become, it underlies a basic truth which has been made clear by all the great hearts and minds of history. Life is not what happens to you: life is what you choose to do with what happens to you.

Change and growth are always possible in people's lives, if they have the courage to change and discipline to grow.

And my third point is: This Senate is unique.

For the sake of the 100 of us who temporarily occupy these seats, Senator BYRD has embodied the truth that the Senate is unique in human history and its value must be preserved.

The genius of our Founders was their understanding of the heights and depths of human endeavor and their ability to translate those thoughts into practical institutions which maximized the heights and minimized the depths.

They knew that the philosophy of democracy must honor both the principle of majority rule and the protection of minority rights. And so in article I of the Constitution they created a House to operate mostly by majority rule and a Sen-

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ate mostly to protect minority rights. The balance they struck has given a dynamic quality to the Congress that serves our Nation well on every conceivable issue.

I have often gone up to Senator BYRD on this floor and told him that he has given me something I could not get from any other source: a proper appreciation for the living history of the Senate that leads to reverence for this institution.

ROBERT BYRD and his service in the Senate is a great American story. It tells anyone who will listen how a person from humble origin can rise to leadership and then strive his whole life to keep the way open for those who would come up behind him.

We know that great ideas are just a generation from extinction. I am grateful to have had the chance to see many of those great ideas embodied and standing on this floor in the person of Senator ROBERT C. BYRD.

My tribute to him will be to try to learn and live out the lessons he has lovingly and forcefully tried to teach us all in this Chamber.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to offer a tribute to my colleague Senator ROBERT BYRD. Few men in our Nation's history have had such a large hand in shaping the U.S. Senate and the destiny of our country as ROBERT BYRD. No one in our country's history has served in the Senate longer or with more distinction.

Senator BYRD's Senate career truly is a remarkable American success story. Only in America could a young man from the coalfields of Appalachia use hard work, intelligence, and determination to one day become the longest serving Senator in U.S. history.

He has often been called the Senate's historian. I have often been amazed at Senator BYRD's prolific ability to weave the great authors and poets of the past into modern relevant lessons for today's society. Cicero, Shakespeare, Tacitus, Aquinas, Jefferson, and Washington are not simply names memorized from a textbook for Senator BYRD. They are living characters with indelible truths that we should all spend more time studying and give more time to in quiet reflection. Senator BYRD reminds us all of the importance of the august traditions of the Senate and why this is the world's greatest deliberative body.

You will never find Senator BYRD without his copy of the Constitution. I dare say there are few individuals here in this body with a greater love or commitment to those noble ideas our Founding Fathers fought and died defending.

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But above all, I have been most impressed with his love and dedication to his family.

Senator BYRD and his beloved wife, Erma, were an amazing example for what we should all strive for in a loving marriage. For nearly 69 years ROBERT and Erma were together side by side, living and loving together. I would like to share some touching words that Senator BYRD gave in testament to his great wife—his greatest treasure:

She met with kings and shahs, princes and princesses, Governors and Senators, Presidents. She entertained the high and the mighty, the powerful and the wealthy of this Nation in a foreign land because it was important to her husband who served as the majority leader of this Senate and various other Senatorial offices. She did it all with an innate, inherent graciousness, incredible patience, and a soft, warm smile. She was a remarkable lady of great wisdom, but most of all, great gentleness, yet she could be tough when she saw injustice or unfairness.

I think America could use more devotion like that.

In closing, I congratulate Senator BYRD on his amazing accomplishments and to his 17,331 days in service to his country in the U.S. Senate. When the history books record his deeds and actions, he will truly be remembered in the pantheon of legends that have forever left their mark on our great Nation.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, just a few days ago Senator ROBERT C. BYRD set a very remarkable record. He is now the longest serving Senator in the history of the Senate. The Senate, the legislative body that means so much to him, now honors him for his achievement and for the remarkable record of service that he has given to the United States. I appreciate having the opportunity to be a part of our recognition of our colleague and his commitment to public service and the people of his home State of West Virginia.

For almost 48 years now, ROBERT C. BYRD has carried the title of U.S. Senator. I think it is fair to say that no one has done so with a greater awareness of what it means to be a Senator and of the institution the Senate represents. He is truly our institutional memory and he is the master of the Senate's rules and procedures. No one knows better than he the precedents and prerogatives of the Senate, and no one is a better protector, promoter and defender of them than he is.

It is not just for the length of his service that Senator BYRD is being honored, however. It isn't so much the years he has served but the service he has provided to the people of the United States and his State of West Virginia that has

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earned him the accolades he has received and will continue to receive from his colleagues and his constituents.

Our celebration of this moment and all he has achieved is softened by the loss of his beloved wife Erma, his greatest friend and supporter, his companion through life and almost 69 years of marriage, who passed away recently. I am sure she is looking down on us all, proud and thrilled to see Senator BYRD's continued efforts to address the issues of importance to his beloved friends of West Virginia and to note his recognition for being their champion for so many years.

During my service in the Senate I have appreciated working with Senator BYRD on a variety of issues, most recently the miner safety act. We were both there at the President's side as he took up his pen and signed the bill into law. As he did, he noted Senator BYRD's presence because he knew the bill was the result of Senator BYRD's heartfelt concern for the miners of his State, for their safety, and the security of their families.

I have no doubt that if we were to look up the words "constituent service" in any book it would immediately refer us to Senator BYRD's work in the Senate. He has been an active and effective advocate for the people of West Virginia and he has worked tirelessly and diligently to address their needs in the Congress.

Looking back, Senator BYRD's life reads like a Hollywood movie script. He graduated first in his high school class and married his high school sweetheart. He then spent 12 years saving the money he needed to start college.

Through the years that followed, he held a variety of jobs that gave him an understanding of the needs of the working people of his State. He also developed his talent for the fiddle, and soon became known for that as well. Before long he was a member of the State legislature and, not too long thereafter, he came to the Senate.

Here in the Senate, no one has shown a greater understanding of the history and meaning of the U.S. Constitution and the role it plays in shaping our values and our way of life as Americans. We both have a habit of carrying a copy in our pocket to remind us of our job here in the Senate and our responsibility as Senators to adhere to the provisions of the Constitution and all it says and requires us to do.

Whenever I think of Senator BYRD, the first thing that comes to mind is his incredible knowledge and understanding of world history and the American experience. He also has a profound and substantive mastery of the legacy of

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the written word. Whenever he takes to the floor to present his views on an issue he always has a ready reference to the precedents of the past, or the words of some great author who had written something appropriate to the moment.

Now, Senator BYRD, the great student of the history of our Nation and so much more, is himself a part of the great story of America and the traditions of the Senate. Every day he joins us here to deliberate on the issues before the Senate, he writes another chapter of his own life's story, a story that will be forever told and retold back in his home State, in the mountains and valleys of West Virginia, by the people who live there who will forever remember him and his legacy as their Senator—a legacy that will never be forgotten.

MONDAY, *June 19, 2006*

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senate has just marked another milestone with the extraordinary service of the senior Senator from West Virginia. I consider him a mentor and a friend. I have had the privilege of serving with Senator BYRD on the Judiciary Committee and I currently serve with him on the Appropriations Committee. I know firsthand his work as the Senate majority leader, the Senate Democratic leader, and as our President pro tempore.

He understands the role of the Senate and the need for it to act as a check and a balance on the President. In recent years, he has been discovered by a new generation of Americans as a true Senator.

By his work and his example he teaches each of us every day what the Senate should be and must be if the constitutional design of the Founders is to serve and preserve our rights and liberties.

One of the great privileges of serving in the Senate is to serve with the senior Senator from West Virginia. One of the great pleasures is to hear him speak on this floor. His continuing contributions to the Senate and the Nation are too numerous to recount but I would like to mention one of the many outstanding moments.

Senator BYRD has preserved the Constitution from numerous assaults. He takes seriously the Senate oath to “support and defend” the Constitution. He has protected it from a number of ill-conceived and politically-motivated amendments, including the so-called balanced budget amendment and the line-item veto. The last time the Senate considered

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amending the Constitution to cut back on our individual liberties and limit the first amendment, that guarantee in the Bill of Rights of our freedom of religion and speech, it was in no small way thanks to Senator BYRD that the Constitution and the rights of Americans were preserved.

On March 29, 2000, he gave an extraordinary speech. I was a manager on the matter and was fortunate to be present. I noted at the time that "periodically, we hear greatness in speeches," and observed that this was a case where the Senate had heard greatness. It is a speech that students of the Constitution and of constitutional history should study.

In the days ahead, we will again be challenged to amend our Bill of Rights for the first time in over 200 years. I can think of no one I would rather stand with and fight for the Constitution than the senior Senator from West Virginia. Every day he walks on the floor of this Senate carrying the Constitution because he knows that the liberties of the American people are not to be sacrificed for passing political favor. He is a fierce advocate for the Nation, the Constitution, the Senate, but first and foremost, for the people of the State of West Virginia whom he represents so ably.

I have said that I sit in the white hair row. It is a row that I picked. Because of my seniority, I can sit just about anywhere I want, but I sit in this row to sit near Senator BYRD.

Senator BYRD is a Senator's Senator, but he is also a Senator who respects and preserves the Constitution. We are supposed to be the conscience of the Nation. There are only 100 of us to represent 219 million Americans. Thank goodness one of those 100 is ROBERT C. BYRD of West Virginia.

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Proceedings in the House of Representatives

MONDAY, *June 12, 2006*

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, this is a landmark day in the history of the U.S. Congress.

On this day, the man who leads our West Virginia delegation with such energy, integrity, and effectiveness becomes the longest serving Member in the history of the U.S. Senate. It is a great honor for me to join my colleagues in saluting this latest record achievement of our senior Senator, the Honorable ROBERT C. BYRD.

The distinguished career of Senator BYRD is well-known to those of us who are so fortunate to serve with him and to learn from him. He is a master of the legislative process, a strong defender of our Democratic institutions, a great intellect on policy issues, a constant voice of clarity and of reason.

And, most important of all, he is an unwavering champion of the people he was elected to serve: the citizens of West Virginia. He never fails to give his very best to them. It is this lifetime of faithful service that has created such an amazing bond between Senator BYRD and the people of the Mountain State—a bond built on trust, respect and a deep gratitude for all that he accomplishes on our behalf.

So on this day—his 17,327th as the Senator from West Virginia—I call upon my colleagues to salute Senator ROBERT C. BYRD on this extraordinary milestone. We are honored, indeed, to serve alongside such a gifted and accomplished leader.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, what do you get when you multiply the power of the beacon by the strength of a workhorse by the steadiness of an anchor? ROBERT C. BYRD. We can celebrate his length of service today but we will always prosper more from his daily leadership for West Virginia over these past years.

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We celebrate that definition of Senator BYRD today as he becomes the longest serving Senator in the history of the Republic.

Today, June 12, 2006, marks a record 17,327th day ROBERT C. BYRD has served in the U.S. Senate. While we desire to mark this milestone and unrivaled achievement with celebration, I suspect the senior Senator from West Virginia will spend this day as he has every day for the past nearly 48 years—by going to work to improve and enrich the lives of the people of West Virginia and ardently defending the Constitution of the United States.

In total, Senator BYRD has served this Nation nearly 54 years in the U.S. Capitol. Senator BYRD served three terms in this body before being elected to the Senate. Here on the House side in Statuary Hall, the old House Chamber, overlooking all, stands sentinel, Clio, the Muse of History, in a winged chariot, a symbol of the passing of time. The statue is there to witness and record the history of the Republic for future generations.

Time does tell all, Mr. Speaker. That is why today is so significant. Time trumpets talent, but talent ultimately triumphs over time. Senator BYRD's time here is a direct measurement of his talent, witnessed by the wisdom of the people of West Virginia who have returned him to serve again time after time. Democracies breed talent. The time of tenure validates talent.

I send words of congratulations and comfort to my Senator on this day, as I know it marks above all the birthday of his lovely and beloved Erma, who recently left us to rest eternally with our Lord in Heaven.

It remains one of my life's great privileges to serve with a man I consider a mentor and friend. I have never seen a greater example of a public servant and I have attempted to emulate my service after his.

Senator BYRD has been an architect of advancement for our State; the influence of his steady leadership over the past five decades can be seen from the hills to the valleys, from our towns and villages to our cities.

And it is with great excitement that I look forward to the continued service of West Virginia's senior Senator. For that is the brilliance of ROBERT C. BYRD—always with his stern gaze firmly fixed on the future, a better, more prosperous, more secure future for West Virginia and all America.

As a beacon you will continue to shine your light of advancement and progress across our entire State and Nation;

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as a workhorse you will continue to spend each day of your service dedicated to providing your people opportunities for prosperity; as an anchor you will continue to steady our land while giving generations of West Virginians and Americans hope, faith, and prosperity.

To my friend, I congratulate you on all you have achieved for your beloved West Virginia and all that you will achieve in the future for our Nation.

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