

Blanche L. Lincoln

U.S. SENATOR FROM ARKANSAS

TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF  
THE UNITED STATES







Blanche L. Lincoln

Tributes  
Delivered in Congress

Blanche L. Lincoln  
United States Congressman  
1993–1997

United States Senator  
1999–2011



*Compiled under the direction  
of the  
Joint Committee on Printing*

# CONTENTS

	Page
Biography .....	v
Farewell to the Senate .....	vii
Proceedings in the Senate:	
Tributes by Senators:	
Akaka, Daniel K., of Hawaii .....	14
Alexander, Lamar, of Tennessee .....	3
Boxer, Barbara, of California .....	19
Carper, Thomas R., of Delaware .....	18
Conrad, Kent, of North Dakota .....	14
Dodd, Christopher J., of Connecticut .....	12
Durbin, Richard, of Illinois .....	12
Enzi, Michael B., of Wyoming .....	10
Harkin, Tom, of Iowa .....	17
Hatch, Orrin G., of Utah .....	18
Levin, Carl, of Michigan .....	10
Murkowski, Lisa, of Alaska .....	22
Pryor, Mark L., of Arkansas .....	5
Reed, Jack, of Rhode Island .....	5
Reid, Harry, of Nevada .....	4, 8
Snowe, Olympia J., of Maine .....	20
Warner, Mark R., of Virginia .....	5



## BIOGRAPHY

During her 16-year public service career in the U.S. Congress, BLANCHE LINCOLN blazed many trails.

At age 38, she made history when she became the youngest woman ever elected to the U.S. Senate in 1998.

Later she became the first woman and first Arkansan to chair the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee in its 184-year history.

She cofounded the Third Way, an innovative think tank that produces new solutions to old problems, and she helped established the Senate Hunger Caucus.

She was frequently at the forefront of bipartisan initiatives to solve questions about national policy on energy, tax, and agriculture.

She served in Congress under three Presidents and during some of America's greatest challenges, including the impeachment trial of President Clinton, the 9/11 terrorist attack, and the great recession of 2008.

A champion for working families as a U.S. Representative and Senator, today BLANCHE LINCOLN is a recognized, national leader on issues related to rural development, agriculture policy, energy reform, elder care, education, and children's health care. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of Entergy Corporation.

A native of Helena, AR, Senator LINCOLN was first elected to public office in 1992 as U.S. Representative for Arkansas' First Congressional District. She earned a bachelor's degree from Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, VA. She also studied at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. The Senator and her husband, Dr. Steve Lincoln, are the proud parents of twin boys, Reece and Bennett. In her spare time, she enjoys duck hunting and fishing with her family and is planning to author a book spanning her life and public career.



# Farewell to the Senate

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I am glad to be here with my colleagues to express my gratitude for the incredible, blessed life's journey I have experienced thus far and the wonderful contributions this place has made to that. I have been enormously blessed by the people of Arkansas to have represented them in the U.S. Congress, first as a Member of the House of Representatives and finally now as a U.S. Senator. Today, I rise as the daughter of two amazing parents, Martha and the late Jordan Lambert, the proud daughter of a seventh-generation Arkansas family, dirt farmers—not to be confused, we didn't farm dirt, but we were hard-working farmers who were not afraid to get dirty, to get our hands into the earth and to do what it was we have done for generations in Arkansas.

I am also the proud wife of Dr. Steve Lincoln and the very proud mother of two incredible young men, Reece and Bennett—great boys. You all have watched them grow up. It is the many unique life experiences each of us brings to this place and to this job that really and truly contribute to the mark we leave on this institution.

When I came to the Senate, my boys were 2 and we were about to celebrate their third birthday. We didn't have any friends up here, so I looked around the Senate to see who had children, who could bring their kids to our birthday party, and there were a few. We kind of had to rent out some kids to come to the Moonbounce to have a great party and it was fun. I realized how important that experience was for me to bring to this body, to share with people. Patty Murray knows—she has been there—Mary Landrieu, Amy Klobuchar, and so many others who have had their children here in the Senate. What a difference that makes in your perspective on what you are doing here. It makes a big difference.

Birthdays were a big deal when we first got here. In my household, you are allowed to celebrate your birthday for an entire week, and it is always a great time. My first birthday

I celebrated in the Senate was unusual. We had just moved. My husband had moved his practice. The boys were here. They had just turned 3. It was hectic. It was a new Congress. We had all just come through an impeachment trial. There were many things going on. When my birthday came around, it kind of came and went. My husband noticed that. We had gone to a spouse dinner shortly after my first birthday in the Senate. My good friend, Joe Biden, who was my seatmate before he left to become Vice President, and his wife Jill had reached out to us to make us feel comfortable. We were young parents. We had small children. We were both working very hard.

The first spouse dinner we went to, we were sitting with Joe and Jill, and Jill produced a lovely birthday gift. It was a monogrammed box, obviously something that was thought about. It wasn't something she picked up and regifted from her closet at home. It meant so much to my husband and to me, that we were a part of a family who realized what we were going through—not just what they were going through but what we were going through. I looked at Jill and told her: You couldn't have done anything to make me or my husband more happy than to think of something that was important in our lives, and they did that. I have been a part of this family, and it has been a great time.

As I glance back on my time here, I do so with great pride, knowing that each of my votes and actions were taken with the best interests of the people of Arkansas in mind. I have always attempted to conduct myself in a manner that would make Arkansans proud, and my tears today I hope are not going to affect that. Living by my mother's rule as we did growing up, if it was rude or dangerous, it was not allowed, and I hope I have definitely met that rule because Mother sent us off with it.

As a farmer's daughter, I am honored to have helped craft three farm bills that were crucial to the economy of Arkansas. I was able to persuade my colleagues to understand the regional differences in production agriculture in our country but, most of all, I am proud I was able to impress upon my colleagues and others, hopefully, across this great Nation of ours the enormous blessing our Nation receives from farm and ranch families, what they bestow upon us, what they allow us and all the rest of the world to do each and every day; that is, to eat, to sustain ourselves, and to be able to grow.

I am particularly honored to have become the first woman and the first Arkansan to serve as the chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. It has been a wonderful year I have had, and I will always be proud of what we have accomplished in that committee this year and certainly in years past.

We passed historic child nutrition legislation. As a result, each meal served in schools will meet nutritional standards our children and future generations deserve, putting them on a path to wellness instead of obesity. As a result, we will see an increase in the reimbursement rate for schools for the first time since 1973—since I was in junior high, younger than my own children today—and we did so by not adding one penny to the national debt as well as doing it in a bipartisan way.

We produced historic Wall Street reform legislation. When I became chairman of the committee, our economy was on the brink of collapse. Our legislation targeted the least transparent parts of the financial system and will bring them not only within the plain view of regulators but also in the view of hard-working Americans who want to know what is going on in our economy and in the marketplace.

Throughout my time in the Senate, I have fought hard on behalf of rural communities and families. In the House, sitting next to Ed Markey on the Energy and Commerce Committee, he always called me BLANCHE “RURAL” LAMBERT. He said, “BLANCHE, every time your mouth opens, it says rural.” I said, “That is where I grew up, that is whom I represent, and you will always hear me speaking on behalf of the families in rural America.”

I wrote the legislation establishing the Delta Regional Authority, the only Federal agency designed to channel resources, aid, and technical assistance for economic development in the rural and impoverished Mississippi Delta region.

I fought for tax relief for hard-working low- and middle-income Arkansas families, and I am most proud of the refundable child tax credit I worked on with Senator Olympia Snowe. I have also fought for the certainty for farmers and ranchers and small businesses in Arkansas with fair estate tax reforms with Senator Jon Kyl.

I am proud of my work on behalf of Arkansas and our Nation’s seniors, including my work on the prescription drug program for seniors, working with Senator Baucus and others on the Finance Committee; the Elder Justice Act that is now law, the first Federal law ever enacted to address elder

abuse in a comprehensive manner. I was honored to be joined in that effort by Senators Orrin Hatch and Herb Kohl and the hard work we put toward that.

Growing up in a family of infantrymen, I am proud to have fought for Arkansas servicemembers, veterans, and their families, specifically fighting for funding increases for the VA and the creation of the VA's Office of Rural Health, as well as better access to quality mental health care for all our veterans.

I came to Congress to fight on behalf of our Nation's children, families, veterans, small businesses, and farmers, and I am honored and humbled that in each of these areas, I was able to achieve legislative success on their behalf.

As my mother would say, straighten up and pay attention to what this is about. This speech is not about yesterday, and it is not about today. What I would like for people to remember about this speech is that it was about our Nation's future and what we can achieve together. We have great work to do. I may be leaving this body, but that doesn't mean I give up on my country. You all have much work to do.

Colleagues, we have approached a fork in the road. This is not the first, nor do I suspect it will be the last, but we have within ourselves the ability in this Nation to choose a positive and uplifting path. Harry Reid teases me all the time: "Do you smile at everything?" You know what. There is a lot to smile about. We have great opportunities ahead of us in this country, but they are not going to happen by themselves. We have the opportunity to choose a path that respects differences of opinion. We have the opportunity to choose a path that sets aside short-term political gains, a path that maintains this body's historic rules that protect the views of the minority but also puts results ahead of obstruction.

Again, I grew up in a family of four kids, and I am the youngest. You all wonder why I am so tough. I have been beat up on all my life. My dad always said, "It is results that count. It is what you finish and what you accomplish." It is not these little battles we fight; it is the war we are going to win, and it is not a war we are going to win without the Republicans or without the administration or without our constituents. It is a war on behalf of our Nation, and it has to be done together.

Many of my colleagues have had the wonderful opportunity of meeting my husband. My husband doesn't like

crowds a lot. I love crowds because I love being together. I love being a part of things. I love being a part of a team. My team is here, my Lincoln team. It is a great team. They have been a wonderful group to work with. You are a part of my team. You are my family in the Senate. Being together and working together is an incredible blessing, and we have to make sure we realize that.

Our country is certainly at its best when we are collectively working together for a goal. All you have to do is listen to your parents or your grandparents talk about victory gardens or rationing nylons or anything else that happened during the war when people were working collectively together.

Our country is facing many challenges. There is no doubt the American people are frustrated. They are frustrated with our lack of productivity, and they are so anxious to be a part of the solution that needs to happen here—the coming together, the finding of solutions to the problems we face and the results we need to have. I am confident that, together, we can overcome all these differences and continue to be the leader of the rest of the world as we have been and should be. I leave this body with confidence that we can provide our citizens with the type of government they deserve: a government that provides results and certainty about the future they so longingly want to be a part of and that they want to protect for their children, rather than obstruction and sound bites and confusion.

With teenage children at home, it is a true blessing that we live in a day and in an age where information is available at a moment's notice. I have watched my children—I had to go borrow the encyclopedia from my cousins next door. My kids click on the computer and immediately there are incredible volumes of information. They teach me: Mom, come look at this. Did you ever know this? It is amazing what is available to us. It is equally as important, though, that we, the American people, take the time that is necessary to understand the solutions to the challenges and not succumb to the convenience of modern technologies to take the place of our own good judgment. We cannot do that. The minds of the people of this country, the minds of the body of this institution ensure that we use the good sense God has given us to know what those right solutions are. To all of America, myself included, we must all discern carefully the information that is provided to us. It is all extremely convenient, but convenience is not what this is about. It is not about convenience. It is all about doing the right thing. So I call on not

only our good judgment but our collective love for this country so we can meet the challenges our Nation faces. I know I am teaching my children that at home. I am blocking some of the things they can get on the Internet. But I am also teaching them to use their own minds, their own thoughts: What is it you would have for your fellow man? How would you want people to behave? It is absolutely critical in this day and age.

To my colleagues on both sides of the political aisle, I implore each of you to set the example for our country by working together to move our Nation forward. We must start practicing greater civility toward one another, both privately and publicly. I can't forget when I first came to the House of Representatives, I called my colleague and neighbor, Bill Emerson from southern Missouri. I told him, I said, "Bill, you know when you move into a new place, where I come from you bring somebody a cake or a pie, a batch of rolls or something." I said, "I am not a bad cook, but I don't have a lot of time on my hands. I want to visit with you. You are a Republican, I am a Democrat, but you are my neighbor, and I am willing to bet you we agree on far more than we disagree on." As we visited for 45 minutes in that very first introduction, we came to the conclusion that we agreed far more on the same things than we disagreed. We decided to start the Civility Caucus. It lasted 3 months.

The fact is, there is much work to be done there, and we can do it.

Taking advantage of political gusts of wind is not what our constituents expect of us nor is it what they deserve. I urge you to have the courage to work across party lines. There is simply no other way to accomplish our Nation's objectives, nor should there be. Although you run the risk of being the center of attention for both political extremes, it is a far greater consequence to put personal or political success ahead of our country, and I know first hand.

We must have the courage to come out of our foxholes—the foxholes we dig into—to the middle, where the rest of America is and discuss our collective path forward. I am counting on each of you to do so in a way that respects the temporary position we have all been granted here and respect this institution of ours that we have been blessed to inherit. It is an amazing place. Each of you has seen it in your own right and you know it.

To the young people of America, I think this is so important. I came here as the youngest woman in the history of

our country to ever be elected to the Senate. I did so because I believed so strongly in the difference I could make. I still do. That is what this country is about. It is about making a difference, not for yourself but for others. I continue that journey now, as I leave this place, knowing there are still so many ways I will make a difference. But to those young people out there in this country, do not think this place is reserved just for age or experience. It is here that you could make a difference, whether you are elected or whether you are one of the incredible and phenomenal staff that helps to run this place, or whether you just simply choose to be out there and engaged in what is going on. There are many contributions to be made to this Nation by the young people of this country.

I leave this body with no regrets and with many incredible friendships. You know the old adage, "If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog." You all know I have a very large dog. But I also have some wonderful friends, and I am very grateful for those friendships.

When I first arrived, my friend Mary Landrieu had been in the hospital. I showed up at her house with a chicken spaghetti casserole, a bag of salad, and a bottle of wine.

She said, "What are you doing here?"

I said, "You know, where I come from, when your neighbor or friend is sick, you take them dinner."

She said, "BLANCHE, we don't do that up here."

I said, "Let me tell you, if we forget where we come from, there is a big problem."

I am grateful. I will not attempt to go one by one through each of you, but know that every one of you all have a special place in my heart. You have taught me something. You have enriched my life in such a way, it is amazing. You also know—many of you personally—that I follow in some very large footsteps, between so many Arkansans, most recent being McClellan and Fulbright, David Pryor, and Dale Bumpers, who is my immediate predecessor. I thank Dale for the incredible mentor he has been to me and for the wonderful things he has done for our State.

I leave you with an unbelievable Senator, and that is my good friend Mark Pryor. He is a statesman. He follows in the footsteps of all of those giants from Arkansas. I am enormously grateful to him for his friendship and, more important, for his great service to the people of Arkansas. So I leave you in good hands, without a doubt, with my good friend, Senator Mark Pryor.

I have been surrounded, both in the past and currently, by an unbelievably dedicated, loyal, and hard-working staff, in my personal Senate office both in Arkansas and Washington, and certainly in the Agriculture Committee. To my staff, they know how much I love them. Our State and this institution are better because of their hard work and dedication. Without a doubt, they are smart and they are a great group of people. I am so blessed to not only know them but to have worked with them.

I have always been blessed with a loving and supportive family who has been my inspiration and bedrock all my life, and it continues to be.

Finally, let me, once again, say thanks to the people of Arkansas. My roots have been and always will be in Arkansas. That will never change. When Steve and the boys and I left after Thanksgiving to come back for the lameduck session—of course, as you all know, traveling with your family and just getting back in time—we left at 5 in the morning. We drove to Memphis because it was faster. We were halfway between. We had been at the cabin duck hunting and celebrating Thanksgiving with family. We were headed to the Memphis Airport, and the Sun was rising over the Arkansas Delta.

Now, I am sure many of you all have never seen that, but it is a magnificent view. It reminded me of all the great things I came here to do. It made me feel blessed with all of the things I was able to accomplish. But to know that I could go back to that same home and see that sunrise, it is unbelievable.

I will always treasure the experiences of this chapter in my life and the thousands of Arkansans I have come to know and love. They are a great group of people. I thank you again from the bottom of my heart.

To the people of Arkansas and this body, my good friends, I yield the floor.

(Applause.)

TRIBUTES

TO

BLANCHE L. LINCOLN



# Proceedings in the Senate

TUESDAY, *November 30, 2010*

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, 16 Senators will retire this year. There is a pretty big turnover in this body, but that is a lot of Senators at once. We are losing an enormous amount of talent, but, of course, we are gaining a lot of talent with the new Senators.

I wish to show my respect for those who have served, which I will do in a summary fashion because we are talking about 16 individuals with very complex and distinguished backgrounds.

One might ask, what are the characteristics of a Senator? There are a lot of different answers to that, depending on your background and attitude toward politics and government. First, I have always thought that one characteristic of almost every Member of the Senate is that he or she probably was a first grader sitting in the front row, hand in the air waiting to be recognized. This is an eager bunch or you would not have gotten here.

Second, it is a group of risk takers. Most people who end up in the Senate get here because a lot of other people who wanted to be Senators were standing around waiting for the right time to run. A lot of people who were elected to the Senate seemed to have no chance of winning at the time they decided to run, but the voters decided differently, and here they are.

Third, we are almost all professional and congenial. That is a big help. It is almost a requirement in an organization of 100 individuals who spend almost all their time with one another, who serve in a body that operates by unanimous consent, when just one Senator can bring the whole place to a halt, and whose job basically is to argue about some of the most difficult issues that face the American people. So it helps that almost every Member of the Senate is an especially congenial person.

Back in Tennessee, people often say to me it must be rough being in that job. They are awfully mean up there.

The truth is, I don't know of a more congenial group than the Members of the Senate. We begin the day in the gym. The next thing you know we are at a Prayer Breakfast, and then we are at a committee hearing. Then we are on the floor voting, and then we have lunch. It goes through the day until 7 or 8 o'clock, or sometimes later. We live together and we get along very well. We know and respect each other.

Not long ago, the Presiding Officer (Mr. Udall of New Mexico) and I were having dinner together with our wives. We were lamenting the loss of families who know one another, the way it happened when his father was serving in Congress and when I first came to the Senate to work for Senator Baker. And that's true. We've lost some of that. Still, there is an enormous amount of affection and good will here. You don't always get to be very close friends in this job, but you get to be very good acquaintances, and you learn to respect people for their strengths.

Senator Domenici said, when he left, that we don't do a very good job of saying goodbye here. That is true. As one part of saying goodbye, I wish to say at least one good thing about each one of the 16 retiring Senators. Much more could be said about each, of course. Mostly, I am going in alphabetical order. . . .

Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN has been a pioneer throughout her career, as a staff member and a Congresswoman, and later as a Senator occupying Senator Hattie Caraway's desk, who was the first woman to be elected to the Senate. BLANCHE LINCOLN was the youngest woman ever to be elected to the Senate and left her mark with the passage of the 2008 farm bill. . . .

It has been my privilege to serve with these 16 Senators. We thank them for their service to our country. They have had a chance to serve in what we regard as the world's greatest deliberative body; it is a special institution. We will miss their leadership, and we hope they will stay in touch with us because they are not just retiring Senators, they are all our friends.

I yield the floor.

WEDNESDAY, *December 8, 2010*

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be printed as a Senate document a compilation of materials from the *Congressional Record* in tribute to retiring

Members of the 111th Congress, and that Members have until Thursday, December 16, to submit such tributes.

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

FRIDAY, *December 10, 2010*

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to our colleagues who are departing the Senate after distinguished service on behalf of their States and on behalf of the Nation. I have been privileged to work with these individuals, to learn from them, to collaborate and cooperate with them, and to, in some small way, help them do what they have done so well—represent their States with fidelity, with great effort, and to move the agenda of the Nation forward. . . .

BLANCHE LINCOLN. BLANCHE and I served in the House together. She decided to raise her family and then came back to the Senate. I can say without any hesitation that without her very courageous stand with respect to some of the aspects of the Dodd-Frank financial legislation, it would not be as comprehensive, as effective as it is today. She stood up and essentially demanded that we create a structure where you could trade derivatives rather than simply clear them. That is a remarkable achievement, and it is her achievement. . . .

To all of these colleagues and their families, my deepest appreciation and my profoundest respect.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise again to recognize the service of another great Federal employee. This is a tradition that was started by our friend and former colleague, Senator Kaufman, and I am proud to carry on that tradition. But I want to first say that I appreciate the remarks of the Presiding Officer (Mr. Reed) about our colleagues who are leaving this body, and I share his great respect for not only Senator Kaufman but all of the colleagues who are leaving the body at the end of this Congress. . . .

WEDNESDAY, *December 15, 2010*

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, let me mention a very abbreviated list of BLANCHE LINCOLN's accomplishments: First

woman to chair the Senate Agriculture Committee; first woman to chair the Finance Subcommittee on Social Security Pensions and Family Policy—in fact, the first woman to ever chair a Finance subcommittee—chair of the rural outreach for the Senate Democratic caucus; chair of the Senate Hunger Caucus; cofounder and cochair of the Third Way; creator of the Delta Regional Authority; author of the 2010 child nutrition bill; a key writer of the 2008 farm bill; author of the refundable child tax credit.

Mr. President, I could go on and on, but most of her accomplishments and contributions cannot be measured. As she worked on the Agriculture Committee, the Finance Committee, the Aging Committee, and the Energy Committee, on a countless number of occasions, on amendments and bills, she became the Senator who was the key to passage or defeat. A couple of years ago, I watched a bill that was making its way through the Senate Finance Committee, and there were a lot of people outside of this Chamber who had a vital interest in the outcome of that legislation. Everywhere I would go I would be stopped and asked, “Is this bill going to pass? Will it come out of the committee? Will it get through the floor?”

What I told the folks who asked that back then turned out to be true, “As BLANCHE goes, so goes the Finance Committee, because she was that way on all of her committees.” She was the swing vote, the key vote to getting things done in the Senate.

BLANCHE is a role model for many people, especially young women who are interested in government.

I remember sitting down with one of my good friends earlier this year and his teenage daughter. We talked about the Senate and politics, history, and Arkansas. As we were winding up the conversation, my friend asked his teenage daughter: “Who is your favorite politician?” Of course, I sat there and straightened my tie because I thought I knew what the answer would be.

Then she said, “BLANCHE LINCOLN.” And I know why. It is because BLANCHE represents the best in Arkansas. She represents the best in Arkansas in politics and in government. She is a workhorse, not a show horse.

BLANCHE gets things done. The other night, with my teenage daughter, I watched some of “The Wizard of Oz.” As I was watching it, I was struck that the scarecrow, the tin man, and the lion were looking for three things that

BLANCHE has, and what every Senator needs in large quantities: a brain, a heart, and courage.

One of Senator LINCOLN's role models she refers to often is Hattie Caraway. Hattie Caraway is not exactly a household name in American politics, but her portrait hangs just outside this Chamber, in the corner, opposite the Ohio Clock. Hattie Caraway of Arkansas was the first woman ever elected to the Senate. There is much to admire about Hattie Caraway as a Senator and as a person, but the one thing that BLANCHE inherited from Hattie is the pioneer spirit.

Even in the first decade of the 21st century, BLANCHE is the owner of many "firsts." Even though we don't like to admit it, and we are reluctant to talk about it, there is a double standard in politics for women. There just is. I am proud to serve with the largest number of women this Senate has ever seen, and that goes double for my 8 years with Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN.

Let me say a brief word about her family. Her husband Steve is an old friend of mine. We trace our roots back to Little Rock Central High School and the University of Arkansas. The Lord has blessed BLANCHE and Steve with two bright, energetic, athletic, and even sometimes well-behaved sons—and they are great—who are currently freshmen at Yorktown High School in Arlington. They bring their parents much joy. They are also extremely proud of their mother. I have seen first hand what a wonderful mother she has been and is. I stand in awe.

In fact, BLANCHE is not only a good Senator and a good mother and a good wife—she is much more. She is a good daughter to her mother, who basically runs Phillips County, AR. She is a good sister in her very large family. She is a good member of her community, helping friends, neighbors, and those in need. BLANCHE is very faithful in her relationship with God, which has given her strength and kept her grounded in good times and in bad. She follows the Golden Rule and puts her faith into action every single day. Simply put, she is a good person.

BLANCHE is also a good boss. She has drawn to her a very talented and hard-working staff in Washington, DC, and in Arkansas. I know they will always be proud to tell people they worked for Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN.

Before I get carried away, there is one minor matter that I believe I need to address. On occasion—rarely, but every so often—BLANCHE runs a little late. I know many of you are shocked to hear this. Let me tell you why that is. It is be-

cause people love BLANCHE and BLANCHE loves people, and she is never too busy to stop, to notice, and to listen. She is never too busy to talk to the Capitol Police or to the janitor here or to that family from Idaho who can't figure out the Dirksen Building. She takes time for people. And that is one of her attributes that makes her so special, because those people are as important to her as the most powerful Members of the Congress. That is what makes BLANCHE special.

It is hard to find just one word to describe Senator LINCOLN—kind, smart, fearless, persistent, knowledgeable, no nonsense, and I could go on. But the one word I would like to focus on today is friend. There are 99 Senators today who consider her a friend. They like her, they like working with her, and they respect her. I have heard many Republicans and Democrats say how much they hate to see her leave because she makes this place better.

There is a passage in the Bible that says: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." This applies to BLANCHE, but not only to the job that she has done here in Senate. It applies to her as a person. There is a lot more to BLANCHE than just being a Senator. In January, she starts a new chapter. And as much as she will be missed around here, we all have confidence there are many more great things to come.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Arkansas has given America a lot of which to be proud. From the late Senator William Fulbright, whom I did not know, to President Clinton, whom I do know, Arkansans have always produced proud public servants.

I had the good fortune to serve with two of the finest Senators we have ever had in this body, Dale Bumpers and David Pryor. I have said publicly—I will say again—the finest legislator I have ever served with—I do not want to hurt anyone's feelings here—is David Pryor. David Pryor was a superb representative of Arkansas and the country.

BLANCHE LINCOLN has continued that long tradition of Arkansans who have come to Washington to shape our Nation. And BLANCHE has never forgotten from where she came.

Senator LINCOLN has been a trailblazer during her time in the Senate. In 1998, she became the youngest woman to ever be elected to the Senate. She was also the first woman elected to represent Arkansas in the Senate since World War II. She was the first woman and first from Arkansas to chair the Senate Agriculture Committee.

A dozen years ago, BLANCHE was one of the youngest people in this body. But from day one, she earned a reputation for being very wise, wise beyond her years. She has always understood we are here to serve, first and foremost, and she has never forgotten that.

Senator LINCOLN once said:

I am not normally a betting person, but I say that putting your money on the American people is about as close to a sure bet as you are going to get.

BLANCHE LINCOLN always bet on the American people, and particularly the good people in Arkansas who first sent her to Washington to get things done in 1992.

Senator LINCOLN never sought the national spotlight. She has always been focused on making sure the people of Arkansas are represented fairly and forcefully. Her legislative accomplishments are too long to list here today. Her impact will be felt long after she leaves this Chamber.

Perhaps her most important work has been her tireless efforts to protect America's children. Senator LINCOLN was the lead driving force, along with the First Lady, on the passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act to make sure our children have access to healthy meals.

She was a cofounder of the Senate Caucus on Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children. She is also the current chair of the bipartisan Senate Hunger Caucus.

So I am honored to call Senator LINCOLN a friend and a colleague, and I join my friends and colleagues in saluting her remarkable accomplishments. I will miss her. But we know her too well to think we have heard the last from her.

It would not be appropriate not to say something about her wonderful family. Her doctor husband and her twins are remarkably good individuals. Her husband is one of the nicest people I have ever met. He has such a great presence about him. I have met him on the many occasions we have been able to get together as a Senate family, and he certainly, to me, is part of that family.

If I ever need to find Senator LINCOLN, I will always know where to look. Because if there is an issue that has gone unnoticed or a person who feels forgotten or a cause that is worth fighting, BLANCHE LINCOLN is probably not far behind and already on the case.

I wish BLANCHE and her family the very best. It has been a pleasure to get to know BLANCHE LINCOLN. I look forward to our future association.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, over the last 210 years, many pioneers and groundbreakers have passed through this Chamber. Today, I would like to pay tribute to one such groundbreaking Senator, one who will leave the Senate at the end of this session.

In 1998, when the people of Arkansas elected BLANCHE LINCOLN to represent them in the Senate, she became the youngest woman ever elected to this body. After compiling an impressive list of accomplishments after joining the Senate, she became, in 2009, the first woman to chair the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. These accomplishments are just some of the highlights of an impressive career of Senate service.

Senator LINCOLN has been among the Senate's most passionate and effective voices in combating hunger, helping found the Senate Hunger Caucus to focus attention on an issue that affects far too many Americans. She has been a tireless advocate for the working families of America's rural communities.

I am especially grateful for the work Senator LINCOLN has done this year in helping craft comprehensive financial reform. She was instrumental in ensuring that the bill we passed into law this year brought new transparency and safety to the largely unregulated world of derivatives trading. I know from hard experience that passing reform that Wall Street doesn't like is, to say the least, challenging. The financial system is more secure, and the people of Arkansas and the Nation are better off, because Senator LINCOLN was willing to take on that challenge and able to overcome it so effectively. She will long be remembered as one of the architects of financial reform.

Arkansas has given the Nation many accomplished public leaders, names such as Caraway, Fulbright, Bumpers, Pryor, and Clinton. As she prepares to leave the Senate, Senator LINCOLN can proudly join that list of Arkansans who have improved the lives of those in their State and this country. I have been proud to call her a friend and a colleague, and I know that, while she is leaving the Senate, her contributions to her country are far from over.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, the final gavel will soon bring to a close the 111th Session of Congress. When it does, we will all return home to spend time with our friends and families to celebrate the holidays. We will also have a chance to meet with our constituents as we prepare for the challenges the New Year and a new session of Congress will bring.

Before all of that occurs, we will have to say goodbye to several of our colleagues who will be returning home at the end of the year. We will miss them and the important presence they have been in our lives and our work over the past few years. One such Senator I know we will miss is BLANCHE LINCOLN who will be returning home to her beloved Arkansas.

During her service in the House and the Senate, BLANCHE was known for being one of the strongest voices for rural America. She understands that what works well in the big cities and towns back East doesn't always work so well in rural areas—like those in her State and mine.

BLANCHE came by her knowledge and understanding of the difficulties and challenges inherent in rural life from the days of her childhood. She comes from a family that for seven generations has farmed rice, wheat, soybeans, and cotton. She may be the only Senator who has walked a rice levee.

BLANCHE is a woman of great faith, and she is very open about her personal relationship with Jesus Christ. "When I talk to Him," she said, "it's pretty informal. I just lay it out there and say it like it is." That is the kind of straight talk that the people she represents found so appealing. Simply put, what life is like on a daily basis for them has been the same for her.

Although she takes great pride in her title as Senator, she has another that means just as much if not more to her—she's the mother of twin boys. She works hard at both jobs—raising her family and making sure she is prepared for every issue that comes to the floor.

Because she was raised on a farm she has a great interest in what can be done to help support the farming community of Arkansas and the rest of the United States. That is what made her such an important part of the effort to draft a major farm policy overhaul. She was no stranger to the issue, having served as a subcommittee chair on agriculture. She did such a good job with those issues she was honored for her efforts with a "Golden Plow" award from the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Her support for farmers across the country and her willingness to work in a bipartisan fashion to forge workable solutions to difficult problems reflect the kind of principles that have helped to guide and direct her during her service in the Senate and throughout her life. Another is the importance of

family—her own—and families just like hers all over the country.

Those aren't just my observations—they are common knowledge back in Arkansas. When BLANCHE won a seat in the House of Representatives everyone was certain that the sky was the limit for her. After she had served for 2 terms; however, she decided not to run for another when she learned she would soon be giving birth to twins. She decided to return home so she could take care of her family while she waited for another opportunity to serve the people of Arkansas to present itself—which is exactly what happened.

As her twins began to grow up, she was able to return to politics. She made a run for Dale Bumpers' seat when he retired and was elected by a margin of 13 percent. Her victory made her the youngest woman ever elected to the Senate, an expression of the great confidence and trust the people of her State had in her.

For 12 years BLANCHE has worn the title of Senator with great pride not for her accomplishment, which was historic, but for the opportunity it gave her to make the world a better place for the people of Arkansas, the people of rural America, the citizens of our great Nation and, of course, for those twins of hers.

I do not know what BLANCHE has planned for the days to come but I think I can predict with safety and certainty that we haven't heard the last from her—and that is a good thing.

Keep in touch, BLANCHE. We will always be pleased to learn what you are doing and your thoughts on the latest issues before the Senate. Diana and I send our best wishes to you and all your family. God bless and keep all of you.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the printing of tributes be modified to provide that Members have until sine die of the 111th Congress, 2d session, to submit tributes and that the order for printing remain in effect.

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

THURSDAY, *December 16, 2010*

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the senior Senator from Arkansas, BLANCHE LINCOLN, who,

like me, will be leaving the U.S. Senate in the coming weeks. I would like to take this moment to thank BLANCHE for her service, and wish her, her husband Dr. Steve Lincoln and her two twin boys Bennett and Reece, the very best as they embark on the next chapter in their lives.

As a seventh-generation Arkansan, BLANCHE has dedicated the better part of her adult life to serving the people of Arkansas. She was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1992. After two terms representing Arkansas' First District she retired briefly to give birth to her twin sons. However, the call of public service led her to run for a vacant seat in the U.S. Senate and in 1998, at the age of 38, the people of Arkansas elected her to serve them as their U.S. Senator, the youngest woman ever to be elected.

As a young woman growing up on her family farm in the small town of Helena, AR, BLANCHE developed a strong appreciation and understanding for American farmers and ranchers and the important work they do for our country. She carried the lessons she learned, and the values they instilled in her, with her to Congress. Throughout her career in public service, BLANCHE has been particularly vocal on issues related to agriculture, hunger, working families, and children.

In 2009, BLANCHE became the first woman to chair the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. She played the key role in brokering the compromise that led to passage of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, otherwise known as the farm bill, which reauthorizes U.S. agriculture policy every 5 years and is of vital importance to farmers and food producers across the country.

Senator LINCOLN and the Agriculture Committee also played a vital role in shaping the derivatives provisions in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street reform bill. These were difficult, highly complex matters, and Senator LINCOLN worked tirelessly to lead her committee throughout the process. Her seriousness and hard work were a tremendous asset to the overall process, and I commend her and her committee for helping to shape the legislation.

In addition to her work on the Agriculture Committee, BLANCHE has been focused on our country's children. She formed the Senate Caucus for Missing, Exploited, and Run-away Children and the Senate Hunger Caucus. She recently worked to pass the child nutrition bill, which will improve the lives of millions of children in our country.

After BLANCHE leaves the Senate, I believe she will be remembered as a tireless public servant who was devoted first and foremost to advancing the interests of the people of her beloved home State, Arkansas.

Once again, I would like to thank BLANCHE for her years of service, and wish her well as she leaves the Senate. It has truly been a pleasure working with her over the years, and I firmly believe that this body will not be the same without her.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to bid farewell to a number of our friends and colleagues who are ending their service in the Senate. Their contributions are too numerous to mention, therefore I would like to take just a few minutes to highlight some of the memories of the Senators I came to know personally.

Some of the departing Senators I have served with for decades. Others were here for only part of a term. All of them worked hard for their constituents and our country. . . .

My good friend Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN was a passionate advocate for Arkansas throughout her Senate service. She is recognized as a fighter who speaks her mind. She cares deeply about American families. She worked hard on her committee assignments. She has been a champion for farmers, veterans, seniors, and Americans of all stripes. She can be proud of her service. I thank her for her contributions to this institution and her friendship. . . .

In closing, the end of this Congress is bittersweet, with so many talented and dedicated public servants leaving this institution. All of them made a lasting impact on the Senate and on our country. *Mahalo nui loa*, thank you, for all your work.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to recognize one of our departing colleagues, the senior Senator from Arkansas, Mrs. BLANCHE LAMBERT LINCOLN.

A seventh-generation Arkansan and a native of Helena, AR, Senator LINCOLN grew up on a cotton and rice farm. She spoke often of her experiences on the farm, and fondly recalled how she was a farmer's daughter. It was her experience helping her father work the land that taught her the same core values she brought to the Senate—honesty, fairness, hard work, and common sense.

Senator LINCOLN is the kind of colleague you want to have in the Senate. She is pragmatic. She is rational. And she is reasonable. If you ever had an issue with her you needed to

resolve, you could count on her to be someone you could work with. In fact, she is well known as someone who tried to bridge the partisan divide. She even cofounded and cochaired an organization dedicated to working across the aisle to bridge differences and create practical solutions.

Senator LINCOLN first came to Congress in 1992 as a Representative for Arkansas' First Congressional District, serving two terms. Following the birth of her twin boys, Reece and Bennett, she made a successful run for the Senate in 1998.

During her time here in the Senate, she served her home State of Arkansas with great distinction, serving in the same seat as the late Senator Hattie Caraway, the first woman ever elected to the Senate. Like Senator Caraway, who also made history for being the first woman ever to be chairman of a Senate committee, Senator LINCOLN made history in 2009 by becoming the first woman in the 184-year history of the Senate Agriculture Committee to be named chairman.

Senator LINCOLN and I were able to collaborate on many issues during her time in the Senate because we served together on two committees—Agriculture and Finance. On the Agriculture Committee, she was a fierce advocate for her State's agriculture interests, particularly rice and cotton producers. Since farm bills tend to be more regional than party driven, she always represented her producers with vigor. She was a key player in the 2002 and 2008 farm bills, both of which have been widely popular throughout the countryside in the North and the South.

She also looked out for those who are less fortunate, making hunger in our country a signature issue of hers. This year she pushed through the Senate a landmark bill to improve school lunch programs. The child nutrition reauthorization bill she authored contains almost 10 times more new funding than the 2004 child nutrition reauthorization. It includes \$3.2B for the first school lunch program base-level reimbursement increase since 1973. I hope the House will follow the Senate's lead and pass this important bill yet this year.

She also served as the chair of rural outreach for the Senate Democratic caucus. It was in this role that we collaborated to introduce the Rural Revitalization Act, a bill to boost the economy in rural America in the wake of the recent recession. This bill made significant investments in rural development priorities, including infrastructure projects, energy programs, housing assistance and rural health care.

Senator LINCOLN also has been a champion for rural health care issues as a valued member of the Senate Rural Health Caucus. During her time in the Senate, she successfully fought to protect small businesses, health care providers, and, most important, seniors in rural communities. Because of Senator LINCOLN's dedication, critical improvements to the Medicare Program were enacted into law. In particular, senior women now have improved access to bone density tests, osteoporosis screenings, and other preventive services.

Senator LINCOLN also authored the Elder Justice Act, legislation enacted into law this year which authorizes new efforts to prevent, detect, treat, and prosecute elder abuse and exploitation. Her work as a lead author of the Small Business Health Options Program Act of 2009 (SHOP Act) led to the adoption of tax credits and small business health insurance exchanges in health reform. These legislative accomplishments and many others will leave this country with a lasting legacy of Senator LINCOLN's commitment to improving the health of Arkansans and of all Americans.

On the Finance Committee, Senator LINCOLN was a strong and effective advocate for working families. She worked hard to make sure that the full child tax credit was available to as many low-earning workers with children as possible. She knows how valuable that benefit is for parents who have to struggle to support their families.

Senator LINCOLN and I share a commitment to promoting savings for retirement. She shares my concern that retirement income security is a growing challenge for the baby boomers who are beginning to head into retirement right now as well as the generations that are following. An important focus for her has been the promotion of employee stock ownership plans, which not only help small businesses—including many successful ones in my State of North Dakota—to grow but also help the employee-owners build a separate pool of retirement savings that they can use during their retirement years.

It is unfortunate that we are losing such a capable and pragmatic colleague as Senator LINCOLN. It will be sad to see the Senate without her next year, but I know nothing but good things await her in her future. I wish her the best.

SATURDAY, *December 18, 2010*

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in these closing days of the 111th Congress, the Senate will be saying farewell to one of our most popular Members, Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN of Arkansas.

During her 12 years in this body, at a time when the Senate has become increasingly partisan and ideologically divided, Senator LINCOLN has charted an alternative course. She has cultivated friendships and collaborations on both sides of the aisle, and has been skilled in forging bipartisan agreements on a wide range of issues.

Last year, Senator LINCOLN succeeded me as chair of the Agriculture Committee. I would note that she is the first Arkansan and the first woman to serve in that position.

She has used that position to champion causes that have been her passion for many years, including revitalizing rural communities, supporting family farmers, promoting biofuels and other forms of renewable energy, and advocating for better nutrition for our school-aged children.

Senator LINCOLN is leaving the Senate at the very top of her game. Just this week, President Obama signed into law the Claims Resolution Act of 2010, the culmination of Senator LINCOLN's efforts to provide justice for African-American farmers who suffered decades of discrimination in agricultural programs.

Also this week, President Obama signed into law the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which will become a major part of Senator LINCOLN's legacy as a Senator.

When I handed over the gavel of the Senate Agriculture Committee to Senator LINCOLN last year, much work had been done on the child nutrition bill but much remained to be done. Senator LINCOLN did a fantastic job—a masterful job—of taking over the child nutrition authorization and shepherding it to a unanimous approval by the Senate. Thanks to her leadership, low-income children will have increased access to Federal nutrition programs, the nutritional quality of the programs will improve, and the financial foundation of the National School Lunch Program will be greatly reinforced.

Senator LINCOLN also exhibited extraordinary leadership earlier this year in the Wall Street reform bill. Again, as the chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, she was able to forge bipartisan consensus for strong reform of the derivatives market. Indeed, the provision she championed will help

to restore integrity to the derivatives markets, it will allow companies to safely use derivatives to manage their business risk, and it will help to prevent future financial crisis. I was proud to support her in those efforts.

For the last 12 years in this body, Senator LINCOLN has been a tireless advocate for the people of her State of Arkansas, for American agriculture, for rural Americans, and for families with small kids. She has been an outstanding Senator and a wonderful friend. I join with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in wishing BLANCHE and Steve and their twin boys Reece and Bennett the very best in the years ahead.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I thank my colleague for his forbearance.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Before Senator Harkin leaves the floor, let me say I am so pleased that I was literally able to be here on the floor and hear you talk about our colleagues. What a wonderful thing to do, and to single out Democrats and Republicans and to reflect upon their service to their States and to our country. I had to mention that.

You mentioned BLANCHE LINCOLN. A lot of people say, "I respect my colleague, I think highly of my colleague," but here in the Senate we love BLANCHE. We love BLANCHE and her family. She is such a joy to work with. Always up, even during the course of the tough year she has had. I remember her more than once saying what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. And she has come through this with a smile and such grace, it is just remarkable. I loved working with her on the Finance Committee, especially on the health care bill that is designed to provide better outcomes for less money. . . .

SUNDAY, *December 19, 2010*

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in honor of my good friend, the senior Senator from Arkansas. Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN will depart from the Senate at the end of this session. She will certainly be missed.

Senator LINCOLN is a seventh-generation Arkansan. She was born in Helena, AR, in 1960 to a family of wheat, soybean, and cotton farmers. Her first elected office was president of the student council at Helena Central High School.

She got a bachelor's degree from Randolph Macon Women's College in Lynchburg, VA, and then went to work on the congressional staff for Representative Bill Alexander.

She left the Congressman's office after 2 years to pursue private sector work in Washington, DC, but would return home to Arkansas to run against her former boss in 1992. Her campaign for Congress was successful and BLANCHE became the first woman ever to represent the Arkansas First District in the House of Representatives.

All told, Senator LINCOLN served two terms in the House before running for the Senate in 1998. That year, at the age of 38, Senator LINCOLN became the youngest woman ever elected to the U.S. Senate and only the second female Senator in the history of Arkansas.

BLANCHE's career in Congress has been defined by her willingness to reach across the aisle and work with Senators from both parties. She is a proud Democrat but has never been an ideologue. Her devotion has never been to a party line or platform, but to her own convictions and to the people of Arkansas.

I have had the privilege of working close with Senator LINCOLN on a number of occasions. Much of the time, we found ourselves on different sides of the issues. But, there were also a number of times where we were in agreement. In fact, I can think of several occasions where she defied her own party's leadership and was, at the end of the day, a difference-maker on a number of important efforts.

Here in the Senate, things have a tendency to get contentious in a hurry. Far too often, partisanship gets in the way of good policymaking. We should commend those who are willing to see past the politics of the day and focus on the long-term impact of the things we do here in the Senate. Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN is one of those people.

I want to wish Senator LINCOLN and her family the very best of luck going forward.

WEDNESDAY, *December 22, 2010*

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to my colleague and friend, Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN.

Senator LINCOLN has spent her entire career serving the people of Arkansas, and she has been a passionate and effective leader for her State.

She has been an inspiration to so many women. Senator LINCOLN made history as the first woman to chair the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, and I will never forget how Senator LINCOLN led by example, showing us you could be a young mom in the Senate, dedicated to your children, while also being a strong advocate for your State.

She has been a leader in the Senate on child nutrition and has worked tirelessly to pass important legislation, including the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act that was just signed into law by President Obama. The measure will help combat the nationwide epidemic of obesity by making sure our school-children have access to healthy, nutritious meals.

As a cofounder of the Senate Hunger Caucus, Senator LINCOLN has played a crucial role in shedding light on a problem that affects so many, both at home and abroad.

Senator LINCOLN was never afraid to stand up for what she believed in. She showed her tenacity in fighting for greater transparency and accountability in derivatives markets during the debate over Wall Street reform.

She has been a fighter for her State and her legislative accomplishments will have a profound impact on the lives of so many children and communities across our country.

I want to thank her for her years of friendship and for her dedicated service here in the Senate. We will all miss her.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in paying tribute to Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN, one of the finest public servants I have had the pleasure not only to know, but to work with during our one term in the U.S. House together and her distinguished 12-year tenure in the Senate.

A seventh-generation Arkansan, Senator LINCOLN has always been firmly rooted in the values and the people of her great State. Their concerns have been her battles—their hopes have been her cause. Her State's bedrock values of family and faith have always been at the center of BLANCHE's life as a daughter, wife, mother, church member, and Congresswoman. She has always been as authentic as they come, warm as she is determined, gracious as she is resolute, and Arkansans wouldn't have it any other way.

BLANCHE understood the inherent human element and dimensions of public service as well as anyone—that you pursued elective office not for personal gain, but in order to make a difference on behalf of others, especially for rural America. For Senator LINCOLN, the phrase “The People Rule”

was more than her great State's cherished motto, it was an organizing principle and a clarion call which inspired her to serve.

The youngest woman ever elected to the Senate and the first woman to serve as chairman of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee in its 184 years of existence, Senator LINCOLN was making her mark from the first time she entered the august Chamber of the U.S. Senate. From the beginning, she stood upon the mightiest of shoulders, Arkansas' legendary Hattie Caraway, the first woman to win a statewide U.S. Senate race in Arkansas and the first woman to chair a U.S. Senate committee. How fitting it is that Senator LINCOLN paid homage to her predecessor by using the same desk on the Senate floor that Senator Caraway used 60 years ago.

I was privileged to work with Senator LINCOLN for her entire time and mine as well on the venerable Senate Finance Committee where we were kindred spirits and compatriots from day one. In fact, our very first year on the committee we forged a historic, bipartisan alliance to make the childcare tax credit refundable for the first time ever, and the bond we formed during that undertaking only increased as we shepherded other dependent care issues through the years to help give families the resources to be stronger and find empowerment through work.

Senator LINCOLN and I, as the former chair and current ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, also joined forces on the Small Business Health Options Program, or the so-called SHOP Act, to increase the number of insurers available to small businesses, so that these engines of our economy could benefit from greater competition. On issue after issue, I valued our collaborations, our mutual respect, and our common desire to achieve results and jettison the partisan bickering that impedes not only progress, but our obligation to do the will of the American people.

Central to that collegiality has been our great tradition as women in the Senate of getting together once a month for dinner, and there is no question that Senator LINCOLN's absence will be keenly felt. Appropriately, we described one of our dinners in the prologue to the book we labored on together in the 1990s, entitled "Nine and Counting," to demonstrate the progress women had made in the upper Chamber. In it, BLANCHE is described as "ebullient, energetic, and unpretentious—she is the picture of representative govern-

ment.” That is the BLANCHE LINCOLN I know and the BLANCHE LINCOLN I will miss.

Like all of the women I have had the honor of serving with on both sides of the aisle, BLANCHE has been a bulwark against the all too prevalent dynamic confronting the American political system—the ongoing erosion of bipartisanship, cooperation, and civility. She has helped bridge the partisan divide as much as anyone, and has acted time and again as a catalyst for cultivating common ground in order to advance the common good.

The Arkansas State flag contains diamond shapes in its center as Arkansas is the only State where diamonds have been discovered. It has been the pinnacle of generosity for Arkansans to share one of their gems here in our Nation’s Capital in the form of Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN. We also thank her husband Dr. Steve Lincoln and their twin boys, Reece and Bennett, for doing the same.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, when the 111th Congress draws to a close, we will bid farewell to 16 colleagues who have collectively given more than 200 years of service to our Nation through their service in the Senate. These include seven of the Senate’s most experienced Members. People like Chris Dodd and Arlen Specter who have each served five terms in the Senate. Kit Bond who has served four terms and Bob Bennett, Byron Dorgan, Russ Feingold, and Judd Gregg, who have each served three terms in this Chamber. . . .

When the 112th Congress convenes in January, the ranks of women Senators will be reduced by one. In fact, the 112th Congress will be the first Congress in recent memory in which the total number of women Senators will actually decline. With the departure of our colleague, Roland Burris, there will not be a single African-American Senator when the new Congress convenes. . . .

All of the women of the Senate will miss our dear friend and highly respected colleague BLANCHE LINCOLN. BLANCHE LINCOLN made history in her own right when she became the youngest woman ever elected to the Senate at the age of 38. Senator LINCOLN represented the people of Arkansas with distinction for two terms, juggling a demanding career in public service while raising two wonderful twin boys Reece and Bennett. She is truly a wonderful colleague to work with, a centrist who comfortably works across the aisle and votes her convictions. She is one of the kindest people in the Senate. I expect great things of BLANCHE LINCOLN in the fu-

ture and I have every confidence she will deliver on that prediction.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve with each of the people who will leave this Chamber when we adjourn sine die. Each has made substantial contributions to their States, to the Nation, and to the Senate during their time here.

○