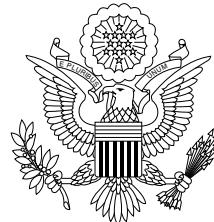


Luther Strange

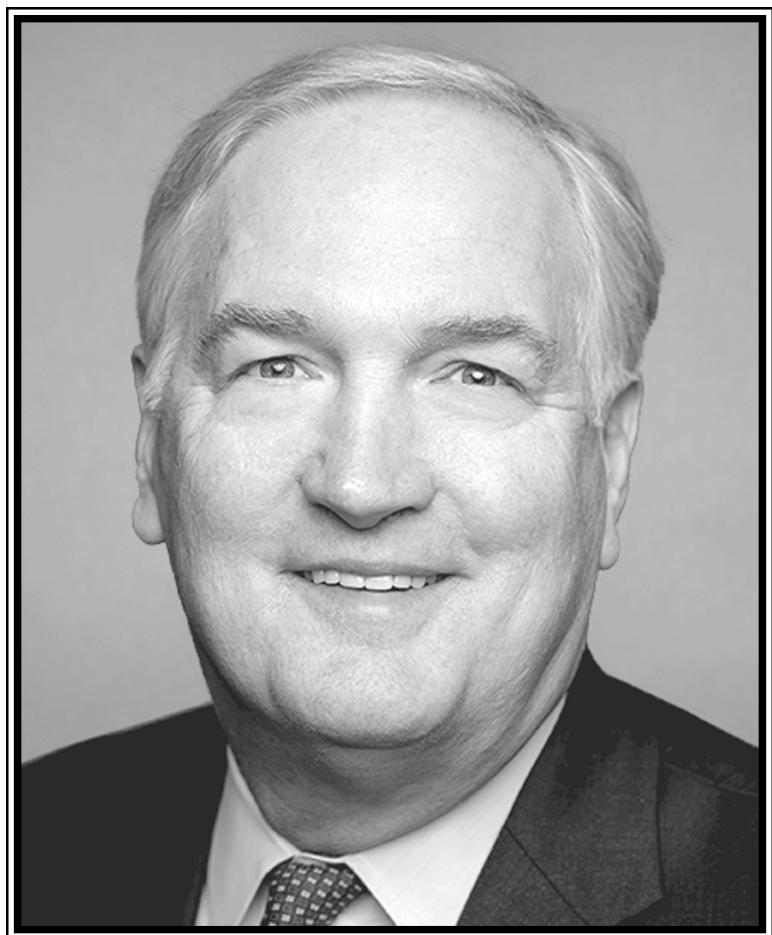
U.S. SENATOR FROM ALABAMA

TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF
THE UNITED STATES



TRIBUTES TO HON. LUTHER STRANGE



Luther Strange

**Tributes
Delivered in Congress**

Luther Strange
United States Senator
2017–2018



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

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Biography

A native of Birmingham, Alabama, LUTHER STRANGE served as the attorney general of Alabama for 6 years before his appointment to the U.S. Senate. While attorney general, LUTHER established a reputation for fighting public corruption, following the facts wherever they led. The professional investigations team he pulled together had the best record in the country, with more than two dozen convictions during his tenure.

LUTHER joined other Republican attorneys general across the country to hold Washington, DC, accountable to the rule of law and stop Federal Government regulatory overreach. A constitutional conservative and pro-life Christian, LUTHER fought to protect the First and Second Amendment rights of Alabamians. In 2014, he successfully argued the 1st Amendment case *Lane v. Franks* before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, LUTHER was the court-appointed coordinating counsel for the Gulf Coast States. Under his leadership, Alabama received compensation for economic and environmental damages in a landmark settlement.

Before being elected as attorney general, LUTHER practiced law in Birmingham. His firm was awarded a first-tier “Best Law Firm” ranking by U.S. News and World Report in 2010, and was also named by Southern Business & Development magazine as one of the “Top Ten Law Firms that Understand Economic Development.” While in private practice, LUTHER was also named “Best of the Bar” by the Birmingham Business Journal, recognized in Best Lawyers in America, and called one of the “Best Lawyers” in Alabama by Birmingham magazine.

Because of his background in Boy Scouts and the impact that organization had on his life, LUTHER actively encouraged young people to explore opportunities to become involved in public service. He served on the advisory board of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, and as a trustee of Talladega College, Alabama’s oldest historically black college. An Eagle Scout by age 13, LUTHER was named in 2011

as a recipient of the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award by the Boy Scouts of America.

After attending Tulane University on a basketball scholarship, LUTHER went on to earn his law degree from Tulane Law School. He was inducted into the Tulane Law School Hall of Fame in 2016.

LUTHER served on four committees in the U.S. Senate which have a direct impact on the people and industries of Alabama—the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Armed Services; Budget; and Energy and Natural Resources.

LUTHER lives in Birmingham with his wife of 34 years, Melissa. They are the proud parents of two sons, and have one young grandson.

Farewell to the Senate

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. STRANGE. Mr. President, I rise today to address my colleagues for the last time. After nearly a year in this Chamber, I am both its newest Member and the next to depart. As such, I have both the optimism of a young student and the battle scars of a man in the arena. Today I would like to offer my colleagues some observations from the perspective of my unique circumstances.

My fellow Senators and I come from different places. We were raised differently, and we have lived differently. In coming to serve in the world's greatest deliberative body, we have carried and tested different notions of America.

There is, however, one reality that transcends our individual experiences. In this Chamber, we are each humbled by history. The Senate has been a forum for some of the great debates of our Republic. It has shaped—and has been shaped by—citizen legislators from every State in the Union. We are awed by the strength of an institution that has weathered great challenges and the wisdom of those who first envisioned it.

As I rise today in that spirit, I would like to shed some light on a page of Senate history that bears great significance in our current political climate. As we know, across the aisle behind us is a space known as the Marble Room. In a building that is home to so many breathtaking historic sites, this alcove has a singular beauty and a story worth telling.

As part of the 1850s expansion of the Senate's Chambers, the Marble Room began as a public gathering place and has been frequented over the decades by politicians and protesters alike. When the Union Army camped on the grounds of the Capitol, soldiers even used its fireplaces for cooking.

For over 60 years, the Marble Room was steeped in the life of the American citizen. It hosted meetings with advocates, constituents, and the free press. It became a very tangible example of our Nation's experiment in representative government. In March 1921, it took on a new, equally important purpose. The space was reserved by the Committee on Rules

as an escape for Senators from the crowded halls of the Capitol and the windowless, smoke-filled rooms where they often had to gather off the floor. It became the place where Senators of all stripes would come to catch their breath and take their armor off. Some would nap, some would eat lunch, some would read the newspapers, and all would end up forming bonds that rose above politics.

Today the Marble Room is almost always empty. This emptiness symbolizes something that worries me about today's politics. It is likely both a symptom and a cause of the partisan gridlock that often dominates this Chamber.

But the story of that room—the interplay between citizens and institution, between pragmatism and principle—is the story of the Senate and in some ways the story of republican government in America.

What was once an incubator for collegiality and bipartisanship has become a glaring reminder of the divisions that we have allowed to distract us from the business of the American people. We each remain humbled by the history of the Marble Room. We stand in awe of the traditions of this hallowed body, but too often we fail to let this history be our guide through today's political challenges.

My time in the Senate has reinforced for me what it means to balance principle and pragmatism and to serve the people of my State honorably, and it has taught me how to navigate the turbulent waters of Washington. I imagine that our predecessors who spent time together in the Marble Room wrestled with similar questions.

After all, the issues we face today are not all that different. This body has been strained before—it has bent but has not broken. Finding lasting solutions to our Nation's problems does not require reinventing the wheel. Our forefathers have done it before, and they have done it right across the hall.

I spent my early years growing up in Sylacauga, Alabama—familiar to my friend the senior Senator—about 40 miles outside of Birmingham. My first hometown is known as the Marble City for the swath of high-quality stone it sits upon, 32 miles long and as much as 600 feet deep.

Sylacauga marble is recognized for its pure white color and its fine texture. Here in the Nation's Capital, we are surrounded by it. It is set into the ceiling of the Lincoln Memorial and the halls of the Supreme Court, and it was used by renowned sculptor Gutzon Borglum to create the bust of Abraham Lincoln that is on display in the crypt downstairs.

Sylacauga marble is used in places infused with tradition and deep history. It is used to enshrine important landmarks. It ensures that memories of the past will stand the test of time to inform the decisions of the future.

In a small house in the Marble City, I was raised by a family that instilled in me a deep and abiding reverence for history and tradition. My father was a Navy veteran and my only uncle, a West Point graduate killed in service to our country in World War II, was, ironically, born on the Fourth of July.

As you can imagine, I didn't need to observe parades, flags, and fireworks to understand the sacrifice people have made to preserve our freedom. I just had to look in my mother's eyes on her only brother's birthday to remember that sacrifice. Forged in service and sacrifice, my family understood the blessing of living in America and the price of passing its freedoms on to the next generation.

Thanks to this generation before me, the Greatest Generation, I grew up strong in Alabama. At a young age, I was introduced to the Boy Scouts of America, as many of my colleagues were. From volunteer troop leaders to the older Scouts I looked up to, the Boy Scouts created an environment of selfless service. As a Scout, I learned to appreciate the institutions of American society and my role as a citizen. By the age of 13, I was an Eagle Scout traveling to Washington, DC, on a school trip to see this great experiment in representative government up close. As I tell every young person who comes to see me, that made an enduring difference in my life.

I often wonder, if we all approached our duties here with the wide-eyed wonder of a young student on a field trip, whether we couldn't accomplish a little more in Congress.

Of course, the strength of this body and the remarkable foresight of our Founding Fathers run deeper than an elementary school civics class or a trip to Washington. For me, the next pivotal moment came as an undergraduate student at Tulane University in spring and summer 1973.

I know many of my colleagues will not be surprised to know that I played basketball in college, and there is a reason why. I am the tallest Senator in history, as I have come to understand it. In between practice and part-time jobs, I did find time to watch the newly formed Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities begin its investigation of the Watergate scandal.

In that moment, our Nation stepped into uncharted territory. The strength of our Constitution was tested like never before. Would the pursuit of justice overcome politics? Would the institution of the Presidency be forever changed? What are the responsibilities of citizens in the Republic when the Republic's institutions are tested?

It was during that spring semester of 1973 that I began to understand the tremendous power of the rule of law. It is guarded by representatives who swear to protect, preserve, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

When my basketball playing years ran out, it was this realization that led me to go to law school. My new game would be learning the ins and outs of this system that ensured the rights our Founders envisioned. My new team would be my fellow classmates and students who would go on to practice law and serve our Nation at all levels of government.

As so many of our colleagues know, the path from practicing law to writing it is well traveled. I was fortunate to travel it with the help of some of Alabama's finest public servants. As a young attorney, I first met one of them for breakfast in the cafeteria at the Department of Justice. In those days, you could go to the Department of Justice without having to show an ID, and I quickly discovered, after I had gotten my breakfast, that I had forgotten my wallet. So Jeff Sessions had to pay for my meal. He has continued to pay it forward to this day, as a dear friend and mentor, and, of course, he is now the Attorney General of the United States of America.

Jeff Sessions is a gracious statesman and a man of principle, and it is not farfetched, in my opinion, to say that some of his temperament rubbed off on him from our State's senior Senator and my dear friend, Senator Richard Shelby. I so appreciate his presence here in the Chamber today.

Over 30 years ago, I was introduced to then-Congressman Shelby by my friend, former Secretary of the Senate Joe Stewart, a person who revered this institution. As a young lawyer, I learned from a man fast becoming a legendary legislator. He would become one of my most treasured friends, sharing many days hunting together in the fields of Alabama and elsewhere and many more stories shared here in the halls of the Capitol.

Together, Jeff Sessions and Richard Shelby represent the finest Alabama has to offer to our Nation. Following in their

footsteps here in the Senate is an honor I will forever treasure.

The example of these men inspired me to get involved in public service. As the attorney general of Alabama, Jeff Sessions set an example. As the most influential, revered Senator in our State's history, Richard Shelby has guided the way, each with an unparalleled reverence for the rule of law.

I spoke earlier about the balance of pragmatism and principle. In doing so, I had my friends in mind. When I was elected attorney general for the State of Alabama in 2010, I drew heavily on their examples of principled conservative leadership.

In this body we are too often convinced that standing for deeply held principles is incompatible with pragmatism. In the 6 years I have served as attorney general, I learned that this could not be further from the truth.

Serving my State in that capacity required balance above all else, as the Presiding Officer [Mr. Sullivan], having been an attorney general himself, would understand. I had an obligation to the people of Alabama who elected me to fight for the conservative victories they were counting on, but I also had a solemn duty to rise above politics and follow the law and truth wherever it led.

Make no mistake, during my two terms as attorney general, I took every opportunity to defend the Constitution and the people of Alabama against Federal Government overreach—in other words, defending the rule of law, the oath that we take.

Together with other State attorneys general, I worked to protect farmers and ranchers from an EPA rule that would turn puddles in their fields into federally regulated ecosystems. We stood up against threats to religious liberty and the Second Amendment, and we took the fight over illegal executive amnesty all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. On these and many other issues, we stood for the rule of law, and we won.

I don't have to prove my commitment to conservative principles. At the same time, I have a record of upholding the rule of law even when my own party goes astray. I have the scars to show for it, believe me. Over my 6 years in the State capitol of Montgomery, I assembled a nationally renowned team of prosecutors behind a common goal: to root out public corruption.

This pursuit led to the convictions of several corrupt public officials in the State of Alabama, including a county sheriff

complicit in human trafficking—the first successful prosecution of its kind in decades.

My team took on Alabama’s Republican speaker of the house for ethics violations, leading to his removal from office and a prison sentence. As you might imagine, we didn’t make any friends in the political establishment by doing so, but we shored up public trust in our representative government.

For their commitment to fighting public corruption, my team has been recognized by the National Association of Attorneys General as a gold standard. I personally had the opportunity to address my former colleagues from both sides of the aisle who are focusing on the same goal in their States. More than any fleeting partisan achievement, it is work like this of which I am the most proud.

When faced with crises, we rose to a calling higher than politics. After the tragic Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010 decimated communities and ecosystems along the gulf coast, I was appointed by the court as coordinating counsel for the Gulf Coast States in that historic litigation. Our team, working together with others, won the trial and negotiated a multibillion-dollar settlement for our State and other coastal States.

Our work on that spill case built consensus, and it found common ground. It brought together the interests of fiscal conservatives and environmental advocates, and we delivered results because it was the right thing to do. While the victims of the Alaska oil spill, which the Presiding Officer is well familiar with, had to wait many years for a resolution, we were able to deliver justice and set a gold standard for responding quickly and effectively to the needs of our coastal communities.

After all, the institutions our Founders laid out in the Constitution are only as strong as the people’s belief in their strength. When America no longer trusts that its representatives are remaining true to their oaths, the entire system loses its value.

As the most recent Senator to take that oath, I remember the feeling of the Bible under my left hand. I remember reflecting on a verse it contains that has brought me peace in times of challenge. Proverbs 19:21, which I keep by my bedside, says: “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”

I remember raising my right hand here in the well, where so many others have gone before—many of whom likely

found it difficult to discern exactly what the Lord’s purpose was in that moment. Each of them came to this body in the face of significant national challenges. Some faced violent conflict, others an economic crisis. Our forebears would not be surprised by the issues before this body today, but I do believe they would be surprised and discouraged by the emptiness of the Marble Room.

Mr. President, the policy challenges we face are not new ones. This body debates a budget resolution every single year. Many years, it also faces questions of war and conflict overseas. At least once a decade, it seems, we face some tectonic shift of the economy.

As a lifelong student of history, I am reassured by stories of the grave crises that have been addressed on this very floor. In this Chamber, the post-Civil War Senate ensured that the Nation stayed the course of healing and reunification. In this very Chamber, the Senate put politics aside to defeat the rise of fascism in Europe and guided the creation of a new 20th-century world order. On this floor, long-overdue support for civil rights was won, vote by vote.

This civil rights struggle is held vividly in the memory of my home State. In the early 1960s, my elementary school in Birmingham, Alabama, was segregated. By 1971, I was taking the court with three young Black men—my teammates, my classmates, and my friends—to play for the State basketball championship.

As our Nation evolves, the traditions and history of the Senate demand that this institution meet each new challenge, armed with the will of the American people.

As I watched with the rest of the country, it was on this floor that the Senate restored faith in our institutions by delivering justice after Watergate. It was a real pleasure for me as a lawyer later in life to get to meet Fred Thompson, who served in this great body and was the counsel for the minority on the Watergate Committee, to see the example he set as a Senator and to call him a friend.

The idea that the chaos and upheaval we see today are unique falls flat in the face of this monumental history. Pundits and politicians alike are too quick and easy to talk in superlatives, but chaos and change are nothing new to this country. The Senate was designed to endure, and rooms of marble are built to last.

Studying that Senate history puts the issues of today in perspective for us, but it also sheds light on the true chal-

lenge of our generation—a newer, more serious threat to the future of this institution and its traditions.

You see, the Senate was designed to accommodate conflict and profound disagreement. It was not, however, designed to tolerate the entrenched factionalism that dominates today's proceedings. It was not designed for the people's representatives to hunker down in private rooms, emerging only long enough to come to the Chamber and cast votes.

There are 100 seats in this Chamber. Each one was contested and hard-earned, but they are rarely all occupied. The less time we spend in the same room, the easier it becomes to view our colleagues on the other side of the aisle as obstacles instead of opportunities.

What do I mean by opportunities? Mr. President, I believe our generation of leaders will be judged by history on whether we strove to heal the divisions of this body and our Nation. In pursuit of that goal, every Member of this body has an opportunity to grow in understanding.

Yet it seems to me that “compromise” has become a dirty word in American politics, and that is a serious threat to our hopes of advancing meaningful policy, in my view.

It seems that reasonable Americans understand what we are called to do better than we do. I see the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture here, who is a dear friend and maybe can put this better than I can. As he knows, a wise farmer in Alabama once told me: When my wife sends me to the store to buy a dozen eggs and there are only half a dozen left, I come home with a half-dozen.

I believe we have the power to bring home half a dozen here in the Senate and maybe even bring home a dozen for the American people. We have the power to be a profound force for good.

After all, compromise was baked into the Founders' design of this institution. At the heart of our system of checks and balances is an understanding that no one branch and certainly no one partisan faction will get all it wants, all the time.

From the very beginning, compromise allowed our Nation to embrace both the republicanism of Thomas Jefferson and the federalism of Alexander Hamilton. The very structure of this body is the result of the Connecticut Compromise of 1787, which accommodated proponents of both equal and proportional representation.

The authors of this very pragmatic solution, Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth, are depicted on the wall right

outside the Senate Chamber, not far from the Marble Room, where their example of finding common ground would be practiced for decades to come.

Mr. President, in the shadow of these founding debates, political voices today are arguing louder and louder about smaller and smaller things. It is easy for those outside this Chamber to insist that they know what should be done, and as long as we remain so deeply divided, those outside voices will always win.

When I leave the Senate, I hope to have lived up to the words of a different voice, familiar to those of us in the Chamber. On April 23, 1910, in a time of great change in this country, as the United States was coming to define a new world order, President Teddy Roosevelt delivered a now famous passage that bears repeating:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasm, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Here today, our Nation faces challenges like it did during Watergate 43 years ago and like it did in the time of Roosevelt 107 years ago. When we have each left this great body, I know we would like to be remembered as men and women in the arena—as people who spent themselves in worthy causes.

I am convinced the worthiest cause we can join today is a return to the collegiality, the pragmatism, and, yes, dare I say, the compromise of the Marble Room.

So, Mr. President, as I leave the Senate, I am indebted to so many—to those who have helped me become the man I am today, to the colleagues who have welcomed me as a partner in the people's business and who are so kind to take time to be here today in the Chamber, and to the great State of Alabama, which I have had the immense honor to serve.

I thank God every day for the blessing of my wife, Melissa, and my children and grandchildren who are here with us today. Greeting every day assured by their love and support has made my work here and throughout my life possible.

I thank my staff in Alabama and here in Washington, many of whom are here joining us, who have risen to the task of serving our great State through troubling times. Their tireless dedication reminds me there is a very bright future ahead for my State and for this institution.

I thank the staff of the Senate serving here on the floor and in the Cloakrooms, the U.S. Capitol Police, and all of those who preserve, protect, and defend this hallowed institution.

I thank each of my colleagues for the privilege of joining them in service. The friends and working partners I have found here in the Senate give me great hope that, in the right hands, this experiment in representative government will long endure.

I thank the men of principle who have served Alabama with honor for years before me. I especially thank my friend Richard Shelby for his friendship and his guidance during my time here in the Senate.

Finally, I thank the people of my State. Alabama is a beautiful place with millions of hard-working, good people who call it home. As I look back on my career, I am most proud of the last 7 years I have spent working on their behalf, both in Montgomery and here in Washington.

Mr. President, in preparing my remarks today, I spent a lot of time in the Marble Room. I reflected on the stone that built it and the bedrock of my hometown. I thought about the lawmakers who frequented it years ago. I thought about the challenges they faced, their own principled stands and pragmatic negotiations. Most important, I thought about the common ground they found there.

Off the record and away from the cameras, this space represents an opportunity to once again find balance. Balance between principle and pragmatism in the Senate would reflect the very spirit of America, which is defined by balance.

The zeal for adventure that won the West and put human footsteps on the face of the Moon is balanced by a reverence for tradition and our founding principles—individual liberty, the rule of law, and the pursuit of happiness. The entrepreneurial drive that built great cities and today drives innovators to ask “what’s next?” is balanced by a solemn remembrance of the struggle and sacrifice that have paved the way.

The Senate is a sacred place that was designed to embrace the spirit of America. To lose the art of balance and compromise in this body is to lose something essentially Amer-

ican. If we cannot find shared cause, shared purpose, in the quiet corners of the space across the hall, then we may never find it here on the floor of the Senate, where the critics are so quick to point out how the doers of deeds could have done them better.

As I prepare to leave this esteemed body, I urge my colleagues, who will face many more challenges ahead, to take these words to heart. For the sake of our Nation, I urge them to return to the Marble Room.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.



Farewell to the Senate

Monday, December 11, 2017

Mr. STRANGE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the remarkable staff that has worked this year in my Senate offices. Individually, they bring expertise and professionalism to their tireless efforts on behalf of our State. Together, they have united in honorable service to the people of Alabama. It is with pride and admiration that I recognize Virginia Amazon, Will Batson, Morgan Blankenship, Brent Blevins, Melissa Clarke, Paula Cox, David Daniels, Valerie Day, Avis DuBose, Jon Foltz, Jacob Gattman, Jordan Howard, Taylor Jetmundsen, John Little, Sandy Luff, Shanderla McMillian, Cecelia Meeks, Nick Moore, Maria Olson, Jake Proctor, Duncan Rankin, June Reeves-Weir, Cody Sanders, Jeff Sommer, Drew Tatum, Shana Teehan, Susan Thompson, Kevin Turner, Brookley Valencia, Dylan Vorbach, and Zandra Wilson.

As they continue their careers of public service, this staff bears the esteem of a grateful State and my utmost gratitude for a job well done.

TRIBUTES

TO

LUTHER STRANGE

Proceedings in the Senate

THURSDAY, *December 7, 2017*

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on behalf of all of our colleagues, I want to thank the junior Senator from Alabama for an extraordinary farewell. Due to the unusual circumstances of his arrival, his service here regretfully is limited to roughly a year, but I know all of our colleagues share the view that the Senator from Alabama has made an extraordinary difference for Alabama and for the Nation during his time here. I know I also express the views of all of our colleagues that we will miss him greatly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise as a Member of this great body to say thank you to our good friend from Alabama for serving. It is such a shame that we have so many good people in this body and some really great people in this body who are here for such a short period of time, and to have a person like Senator STRANGE come before us and be part and try to make a difference.

I truly enjoyed his speech based on bipartisanship, which is what we are all here for, and seeing how we have digressed to the point where there is very little bipartisanship that goes on and then knowing that we can make that change and make a difference.

I want to thank the Senator. It has always been a joy to be around him. He has such a way and such a demeanor about him—his congeniality, his camaraderie and wanting to make this place work the way it is supposed to work and the way they have told us it did work.

With that I would say, Senator, I am grateful I got to know you. I am grateful that you have passed through these doors for all of us to call you our friend. I am sad that you are not staying.

I know there are bigger things in store for you. I know your life is going to be blessed, and with that, you blessed us by being part of us for a period of time.

Thank you, Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I have had the unique privilege of knowing Senator STRANGE in that I have the privilege of being the chairman of the all-powerful—sometimes-powerful—Senate Committee on Agriculture.

I hope every Senator will read your comments, sir. I think, perhaps, every Senator in their heart wishes, as you do, that we could get along better. For better or for worse, I think we represent the Balkanization in this country, but we come here with the hope that, yes, through compromise, and, yes, that in working together, we can represent our people in a much better fashion. Your remarks, I think, really hit the nail on the head in terms of what we should be doing.

We do that on the Committee on Agriculture. When LUTHER first came to the Senate and asked to be on the Committee on Agriculture, I knew right then he was a special person and would be a special Senator. A lot of people get sentenced to the Committee on Agriculture. It is a pleasant sentence, really, when you do that work. I have been privileged to be the chairman in the House and in the Senate for quite a few years. We will not get into that.

The Senator asked to be on the Ag Committee, and so, when we try to put together a farm bill, it is our responsibility—both the distinguished Ranking Member Stabenow and myself—to travel to various States. We have sat on the wagon with the farmer, the rancher, the grower, and said, “What do you think?” We listen to the farmer first, knowing that if you are fair to the farmer—they are the backbone of the Nation and underappreciated in our society today.

So I have been going to Kansas, Michigan, and Montana, and I said: I haven’t been down South, I am going to Alabama. I am going to go down there with our newest Member who wants to be on the Ag Committee and has already demonstrated his affection, not only for the committee but his commitment to represent farmers and growers and ranchers in Alabama. So we planned an event. We were going to listen to every commodity group, every farm organization, and any farmer who wanted to come in and talk to the chairman and the new member of the Ag Committee.

This was a special day for me and, as sometimes happens, planes don't fly. Planes fly to Atlanta, but they don't fly from there, which was the case when we were going down the night before, before we had this opportunity to visit with a lot of folks in Alabama. If you try to find a rental car that time of night, it is difficult. So we finally found a rental car after the third or fourth rental car opportunity, and then we drove to Montgomery.

Now, if you drive from Atlanta to Montgomery—people don't usually recommend doing that, but I will tell you, from about 1:30 in the morning to about 4 a.m., it is an easy drive. Then you get to Montgomery, and you get to that square they have there in Montgomery where they have a statue of Hank Williams. So the first person to welcome me in Montgomery, Alabama, was Hank Williams. Of course, being a country and western aficionado—or at least fan—I thought that was very special. So we went down and saw Hank. I saluted him.

Then we went off to the hotel. Of course, the hotel had given up our hotel reservations. So that posed a little bit of a problem. They finally made some accommodations for me, at least, but it didn't have a bed. It was an office room. Then I finally figured out it was a wall bed, and I pulled the wall bed down, but there were no sheets and pillows. I just sort of slept in my wardrobe, so to speak. Then I said, "I can't sleep." It was getting to be 5:30, 6:30 a.m., and we were starting off about 7 in the morning.

I came down the elevator, and as happened, the elevator door opened up. Across from me was LUTHER. He said, "How did you sleep, Mr. Chairman?" I said, "As well as could be expected." Finally, I told him what happened.

After all of that, I had probably one of the best days in my service in the Senate, visiting a State I had not visited before. I talked to every commodity group, every farm organization representative. We went out to many different farms. I learned first hand that a big export factor to China is peanuts. If we are going to be making friends with China—or at least getting to a situation where we have a better relationship with any country—as you know, agriculture can be a tool for peace. It is a stabilizing factor. It becomes a national security situation. We talked about this at length.

I must say I was very impressed with the folks I met there and the respect they had for you, LUTHER, for wanting to be on the Ag Committee, obviously, and for your record as attorney general and your public service. To a person, they were

committed to you and thanking you for your service on the Committee on Agriculture.

So wherever you go, whatever you do, I know you are an Aggie. I know you will continue to fight for your farmers, and, as you know, we are going through a pretty rough patch.

Personally, I want to thank you for your friendship, and, personally, I want to thank you for the message you gave to all Senators here, which I think should be mandatory in our quest to see if we can't achieve a better situation in working together to find solutions. The Senator from West Virginia and I feel the same way, and I know whatever you are going to do, you will do so with dignity and with respect and with strong leadership.

Thank you, my friend.

Mr. STRANGE. Thank you.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to bid farewell and to express my gratitude to Senator LUTHER STRANGE as he leaves the U.S. Senate. During his too-brief tenure here, he established an admirable reputation for hard work, dedication to his State of Alabama and our Nation, and a commitment to principles.

Senator STRANGE was appointed to the Senate last February to fill the vacancy created when Senator Jeff Sessions became Attorney General of the United States. From the start, it was clear that Senator STRANGE's pride in his home State was matched only by his humility at being selected to represent the State he loves.

Building on the reputation he earned as attorney general for Alabama, Senator STRANGE established himself here as a determined advocate for the rule of law and defender of our Constitution. From preserving the Senate traditions that foster full and open debate to supporting our veterans and strengthening our national security and our economy, Senator STRANGE has worked on a number of important initiatives.

Senator STRANGE has met the obligations of his office with energy and dedication, and it has been an honor to serve with him in the U.S. Senate. I wish him and Melissa all the best in the years to come and look forward to many more contributions and accomplishments from this distinguished American.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I just want to say on the record how much I have enjoyed serving with the Senator from Alabama. He has meant a great deal to this institution, to this body during his short time here, and it is sad to see him go.

THURSDAY, December 21, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on a completely different matter, I would like to say a few words in tribute to a fine colleague whose all-too-brief time in the Senate will soon draw to a close.

Senator LUTHER STRANGE of Alabama is the newest Member of this body, having been sworn in just this past February, but he did not waste any time in making an impact. In this historic year for the Senate, LUTHER quickly emerged as a strong voice on policy and an important vote on landmark legislation.

On a personal level, it didn't take anyone long to realize that this newcomer would rank among the most diligent, dedicated, and public-spirited Members of this institution. At first, we even wondered whether LUTHER might be a little too diligent.

Upon his arriving in Washington, the Senator dived into the task of meeting his colleagues with the friendly earnestness that is his calling card. The first time LUTHER passed Senator Roberts in a Capitol hallway, he stopped to introduce himself and share his excitement to be joining the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. There was nothing unusual there, but I have it on good authority that the very next day, when LUTHER found himself sharing an elevator with Senator Roberts, the junior Senator from Alabama introduced himself all over again. Not long after, a chance meeting on the train occasioned yet a third introduction. Pat Roberts had to put a stop to it.

“Yes, LUTHER,” he broke in. “I think we’ve met before—and we’re sure glad to have you here, too.” We certainly were glad as well.

LUTHER came to the Senate with a national reputation for integrity and excellence in public service. That started young. The proud son of a Navy veteran turned college professor, this Birmingham paperboy made Eagle Scout at age 13—an accomplishment that still shows up on his lapel from time to time.

He received his bachelor's from Tulane, where—and I know this may come as a shock—the man the Senate historian has apparently verified as the tallest Senator in history played scholarship basketball.

After graduation, to save for law school, he spent a year on a boat that supplied oil rigs in the North Sea. He pitched in on everything—did whatever it took to help the team—and helped the crew navigate the ship through choppy waters.

These qualities will sound familiar to everyone who has worked with LUTHER since.

He built a sterling reputation as an up-and-coming lawyer in private practice. He then set it aside to serve the people of the State he loves, as Alabama's attorney general.

In the fine Alabama tradition of public servants, like his friends and mentors Jeff Sessions and Richard Shelby, he combined a steel spine with a servant's heart. Whenever the people of the State needed defending—their businesses, their religious liberties, their Second Amendment rights—their attorney general was there for them.

Then as now, he fought fiercely when times required it and his principles demanded it, but no matter how important the issue at hand, from the Supreme Court to the Senate floor, LUTHER never loses his good humor or his conviction that we serve in order to help our constituents, not to aggrandize ourselves.

LUTHER STRANGE reminds us that character counts. He reminds us that deeply held conservative values do not in any way stand opposed to collegiality and common decency. To the contrary, our values require these things.

He reminds us that the American people need not choose between leaders who share their principles and leaders who dignify public service. They should hold their elected officials to a high standard and demand that we do too.

If you cannot tell, LUTHER's colleagues look up to him in more ways than one. We are sorry to see him go.

In the farewell speech that Senator STRANGE delivered on this floor, he challenged his colleagues to revive greater comity in this body. He implored us not to give up on bipartisanship or on building friendships that run deeper than policy disagreements. He reminded us that the Senate's Marble Room, across the hallway from this Chamber, used to be a popular gathering place. Senators from both parties would relax and get to know one another above and beyond the spe-

cific disputes of the day. Today, LUTHER pointed out, this room often sits empty.

His advice is well taken, and I have an idea how we could begin to put it into practice. All of us on both sides of the aisle could try to approach our work with more of the optimism, can-do spirit, and reverence for this great institution that LUTHER STRANGE has brought to work every single day.

Of course, the Senate's loss will be a happy gain for LUTHER's beloved family.

Despite the fact that his bright idea for a first date with Melissa was a trip to the Talladega Superspeedway to take in the Talladega 500, he convinced her to marry him anyway. Their loving partnership has now spanned 36 years and counting. They have raised two sons. I hear that Luke is just an inch shy of his dad's height and that Keehn is an inch taller. In recent years, LUTHER and Melissa have become the proud grandparents of two young boys.

I have it on good authority that a certain black Lab named Sophie might be the most excited of all the Stranges to welcome the Senator back home to Birmingham.

Wherever LUTHER's distinguished career takes him next, I know he is glad it will involve more time with the people he loves most.

He has served with distinction in the Senate during a year of historic achievements. On behalf of Alabamians, he has made vital contributions on the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; the Committee on Armed Services; the Committee on the Budget; and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. He has cast votes to help middle-class families and set America on a brighter trajectory for years to come.

We thank him and wish him every success in his future endeavors, and we salute him for the dedicated service he has rendered to his country and to the people of the great State of Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor my good friend and colleague from Alabama, Senator LUTHER STRANGE, prior to his departure from the U.S. Senate.

While LUTHER and I have worked closely together in the Senate, our friendship dates back nearly four decades. Over the years, I have had the privilege of not only getting to know LUTHER, but also getting to know his wife, Melissa, and his two sons, Luke and Keehn.

Even before LUTHER was appointed to the U.S. Senate, he and I worked alongside each other throughout much of our

careers. When LUTHER was sworn in to fill Attorney General Sessions' seat, I was pleased to have him just down the hall from my office.

As soon as LUTHER was sworn into the Senate, he hit the ground running. His camaraderie, integrity, and great attitude did not go unnoticed. Another thing we all quickly observed about LUTHER in the Senate was his willingness to help in any situation. He was always the first to volunteer, whether the task be big or small. LUTHER is admired by Members on both sides of the aisle, which is rare in Washington. He has made a lot of friends in the Senate and has worked in a bipartisan fashion.

In addition to his work ethic and great attitude, LUTHER was able to accomplish an incredible amount legislatively in a short period of time. His successes include his work on the final National Defense Authorization Act conference negotiations, securing three littoral combat ships, his help in achieving the 51 votes needed to pass a once-in-a-generation tax reform package, and helping repeal Obamacare.

LUTHER's time in the Senate was cut too short. I would be remiss not to mention how much I, along with my Senate colleagues, have enjoyed his company.

I thank Senator STRANGE for his time and service both to Alabama and our Nation here in the Senate. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors, and I look forward to continuing our close friendship.

Thank you.

THURSDAY, December 13, 2018

ORDER FOR PRINTING OF SENATE DOCUMENTS

Mr. McCONNELL. 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 115th Congress, and that Members have until Friday, December 21, to submit such tributes.

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

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