

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN DICK NICHOLS

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, last month I was at the World War II Memorial greeting a number of Kansans who had arrived on an Honor Flight, and I certainly want to pay tribute to each of our service men and women and veterans. What a great experience it was on a beautiful day at the memorial. One of those veterans is someone I wish to talk about this evening to my colleagues here in the Senate.

Getting off the bus that day was my friend and a former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives for the Fifth Congressional District of Kansas, Dick Nichols. There are many things I admire about Kansans. Folks from my home State always look out for others. They commit their lives to helping and improving the lives of their communities, our State, and our Nation in order to make certain there is an even better opportunity for the next generation. Congressman Nichols is certainly one of those individuals. I wish to pay my regards to him today.

Dick was born in Kansas, raised in Fort Scott, and served during World War II as an ensign in the U.S. Navy. After serving our Nation with great integrity and humility, he pursued and achieved a bachelor's degree in science from Kansas State University in 1951. Congressman Nichols is a supporter of education but particularly a supporter of education that comes from Kansas State University. He is a Wildcat through and through.

Dick worked in a number of roles related to agriculture and banking in both the Topeka and Hutchinson communities in our State before he moved to McPherson—his home now. In McPherson, he began his career as a longtime community banker at the Home State Bank. He became president of that bank in 1969, and in 1986 he was elected to serve as president of the Kansas Bankers Association.

That same year Dick got some national notoriety: He was stabbed on the Staten Island Ferry by a homeless refugee from Cuba while touring the Statue of Liberty. While recuperating in the hospital, he was visited by then-New York Mayor Ed Koch, who apologized on behalf of the city of New York for the event. He was also invited to the Johnny Carson show to tell of his experiences in New York City. But even during that particular event, what he said on the talk show and what he told Mayor Koch was that he always looked for the best in every person and in every situation.

Dick continued as an active banker and served as the president and chairman of the board of his bank until he was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1990. Due to reapportionment in our State following the 1990 census, his district, the Fifth District, was eliminated and we went from five congressional districts to four, and Dick returned to the Home State Bank as chairman of its board. But whether he

was a Congressman representing the Fifth District, a community banker in his hometown, or an ensign in the U.S. Navy, Dick always put service to others above self-interest.

Prior to his election to office in Congress, he was active in Kansas politics and particularly Republican politics. In my first campaign in 1996 for the U.S. House of Representatives, it was an honor for me to have him agree to serve as my campaign's honorary chairman.

In addition to his political involvement, Dick was also engaged in so many other things, many of them related to the community he cares so much about, McPherson, KS, including the chamber of commerce and the Rotary Club. He became the commanding general of the Kansas Cavalry, which is a group of business men and women from across our State who band together to recruit and encourage new businesses to come to our State, and he continued to serve other service men and women and veterans through his membership and participation in the American Legion and VFW.

Dick has often been quoted as saying: Much of life is in our mental attitude. If you think great things might happen, they do. If you question them ever happening, they won't.

I agree with that sentiment, and I have seen Dick Nichols live that in his life. Because of his attitude and character, many—including me—were inspired not only to get to know him but then to try to model their public service after his.

In McPherson, there are few people more loved and respected than Dick Nichols. It is a privilege for me to be able to call him a friend and mentor. When I initially ran for Congress and needed advice about his community and his county, he was the first person I reached out to. I always remember, as I was campaigning for the very first time for office in Congress, I had people tell me: If you are a friend of Dick Nichols', you are a friend of mine. And it is an opportunity we all ought to take to remember that how we conduct ourselves influence and affect so many others.

While I know that what happens here in the Senate and what happens in Washington, DC, has huge consequences and effect upon Kansans and Americans—and, in fact, people around the globe—I continue to believe that we change the world one person at a time, and it happens in communities across my State and across the country. Dick Nichols represents the kind of person who changes lives—in fact, changes the life of every person he meets.

So today, having seen Dick Nichols just a few weeks ago at the World War II Memorial, built in his and other World War II veterans' honor, I express my gratitude to Congressman Nichols for his service to his community, to our State of Kansas, and to our Nation. And I use this opportunity to remind

myself about the true nature of public service, about caring for other people. I wish Dick and his wife Linda and their families all the very best.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF ROBERT LEON WILKINS TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Robert Leon Wilkins to be United States Circuit Judge.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert Leon Wilkins, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District Of Columbia Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled in the usual form.

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the nomination of Judge Robert L. Wilkins to be a circuit judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. I was pleased to introduce Judge Wilkins to the Judiciary Committee in September, and the committee favorably reported his nomination in October.

Judge Wilkins currently serves as Federal District Judge for the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, and was unanimously confirmed by the Senate for this position in 2010. I urge the Senate to invoke cloture to allow an up-or-down vote on this extremely qualified nominee.

Judge Wilkins is a native of Muncie, IN. He obtained his B.S. cum laude in chemical engineering from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and his J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Following graduation, Judge Wilkins clerked for the Honorable Earl B. Gilliam of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California. He later served as a staff attorney and as head of Special Litigation for the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia. He then practiced as a partner with Venable LLP, specializing in white collar defense, intellectual property, and complex civil litigation, before taking the bench as a judge.