

Office of the Vice President as Assistant to the Director of Advance from September 1987 to August 1988, when he left to join the staff of Bush-Quayle '88. From 1985 to 1987, Mr. Parmer was a Special Assistant for External Relations at the U.S. Agency for International Development. During the 1984 elections, Mr. Parmer was political director of the Mississippi Republican Party.

In 1983, he served on the support staff of the summit of industrialized nations in Williamsburg, VA.

Mr. Parmer is a native of Meridian, MS, and graduated from the University of Mississippi with a bachelor of public administration degree in 1983. He is married to the former Ardis Elaine Johnson of Reno, NV, and resides in Chevy Chase, MD.

Remarks at the Swearing-In Ceremony for Edward R. Madigan as Secretary of Agriculture

March 12, 1991

The President. Thank you all very, very much for that welcome. Thank you, Bob. Thank you, Congressman Michel; and Mr. Speaker, delighted to see you, sir; members of the President's Cabinet here today. Monsignor O'Dea, nice to see you and meet you; your altar boy's come a long way. [Laughter] May I greet the former Secretaries of Agriculture and the distinguished Members of the House and Senate, so many with us here today.

It's a great pleasure to witness the swearing-in of the newest member of our Cabinet team, Secretary Ed Madigan. He brings personal qualities to the job that farmers and ranchers hold dear: honesty and integrity. You ask anybody, any of his colleagues, any of us here in Washington that know him, or go back in Illinois and talk to his friends there: honesty and integrity is what Ed Madigan is all about. When Ed says he's going to do something that will be in the best interests of the farmers and America's consumers, you can rest assured he's shooting straight.

But before I go any further, I'd like to put the momentary spotlight on another individual—outstanding individual. I know Ed Madigan shares my high esteem for the first-class performance of his predecessor, Clayton Yeutter, who's here with us. Clay, stand up. [Applause] Let it be said of Clayton that he's moved on to another fertile field. [Laughter] But I do count my blessings that I keep Clayton's good counsel and that I now add Ed Madigan to our Cabinet

team.

Ed's experience is going to be put to immediate use, as everybody in this building knows. He's spent 16 of his 18 years in the House on the Ag Committee, 8 of them as the ranking Republican. He played a leading role in the writing of both of the past two farm bills. And that's a major reason that we've been able to build more free market flexibility into our Federal farm policy.

Ed takes the reins at USDA at a critical time. The new farm bill must be implemented. And that's going to be a challenge because farmers have a lot more decisions to make for themselves. And Ed's guiding hand will be a steady influence on the process.

This Department is fortunate to have a Secretary with Ed Madigan's experience. And he's not only from the land of Lincoln; he's from the town of Lincoln, in the midst of some of the Nation's most fertile farmland. He knows firsthand about the modern miracle that is American agriculture, the special combination of hard work and high tech that enables this small percentage of the American work force to feed a nation and the world.

And Ed knows the farming business. Back where he grew up, agriculture is the economy. Of course, agriculture is today a critical area in international trade and a critical element of the American economy. Agriculture is one sector that maintains a positive trade balance for this nation.

And now, I know that farmers are up against the elements every day, and maybe there's nothing farmers can do about drought and natural disaster, but American farmers should not have to fight foreign government subsidies that give our competitors unfair advantage. And I know that Ed will work just as closely as Clayton had with our Trade Representative, Ambassador Carla Hills, to ensure that trade is free and fair.

And at this point, let me simply emphasize that the renewal of Fast Track authority is, in my view, vital to the best interest of the United States of America. It's absolutely essential. And Ed, I want to pledge to you that I will work with you as I have with Clayton and Carla Hills to encourage Congress to move forward on the Fast Track authority.

Trade and farm policy are only a part of the agricultural agenda. Agriculture is carving out a key place in service to our environment with the planned increase in grain-based alternative fuels. Agriculture also administers the tremendously successful WIC program—WIC, the Women, Infants, and Children initiative—which I've urged Congress to expand to serve an additional 200,000 needy children.

From soil conservation to food stamps, from rural development to forestry, the USDA is involved in far more than helping farmers put food on the table. In every one of these areas, Ed is fortunate in having the very best, a Department of dedicated professionals to help him meet the many challenges that he'll face.

You know, back when Ed was a student at Lincoln College, Ed carved his name into a wooden desk. And years later, when Ed had gone on to become Congressman Madigan, his college made him a gift of that desk. And in two decades' time, Ed has made his mark up there on Capitol Hill, and I am confident that he's destined to make his mark as one of our very greatest Secretaries of Agriculture.

So, once again, I thank all of you for this warm welcome. To those who have not met their new boss, their new associate, Ed Madigan, you're in for a treat. You've got a class-act Secretary. And it is my pleasure now to watch him take the oath of office.

[At this point, Secretary Madigan was sworn in.]

Secretary Madigan. We only get this President for a few minutes. [Laughter] Mr. President, I have to tell you at the outset, somebody stole that desk. [Laughter] We put it in the barn out at my dad's house, and when I went to get it, it was gone. So, whoever has it now has the desk of the Secretary of Agriculture. [Laughter]

Mr. President, thank you for the confidence that you have shown in me by appointing me to this job. It is an honor, a very distinct honor, to join the Cabinet of the most popular President in American history.

And Bob Michel, I want to thank you for showing me through the years what the right demeanor for a Member of Congress is and should be. You are not as popular as the President, but you're right up there.

Some of you folks who are newer to this town may not know that Tom Foley was the chairman of the Agriculture Committee for a good period of the time that I served on that committee. And Speaker Foley, I want to thank you for your example in teaching people like myself how you deal with the disparate interests that are American agriculture. Did you notice that he has that oath memorized? [Laughter]

Kika and all my House colleagues, I thank you for 19 years of wonderful friendship. And I thank the Senators, not only for their friendship but also for their support; and Pat Leahy and Dick Lugar, for the expeditious way that you moved my nomination through the Senate. You probably want to know why I was in such a hurry: Sid Yates wants my Rayburn office. [Laughter] That's kind of an inside joke, but Members of Congress understand it. [Laughter]

Most of all, I want to thank Evelyn Madigan for never once—never once in 25 years—complaining about being a politician's spouse. God bless you.

Along with my Ag Committee buddies, we've been through some good times and some bad times, Mr. President. We went through the good times in the 1970's when we were selling everything that we could grow. And we went through the bad times in the 1980's when we lost our markets to

unfair competition. And during those 1980's we spent billions and billions of dollars and still lost farmers. There's a lesson there for us, and that lesson is that agriculture's future is in fair trade.

And the President is absolutely right that we owe much to Clayton Yeutter and Carla Hills for bringing us so close to the point of being able to get a trade negotiation that is good for agriculture. I join with the President in saying that I certainly hope that we see this through, because not doing so would be like folding your cards when the odds are that you probably have the winning hand.

Along with all the very talented people here at the Department, we look forward, Mr. President, to using all of the tools at our disposal to make things better for American farmers and ranchers. I look forward to working with you and with this wonderful Cabinet that you have, and I thank you for this wonderful opportunity.

I have to tell you a story about Monsignor O'Dea. He was my parish priest when I was a little boy. I was his altar boy. He taught me how to drive a car. I drove his car right into the side of his garage. [Laughter] He never gave up on me. [Laughter] Monsignor, thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. on the Patio at the Agriculture Building. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Robert H. Michel, who introduced him; Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Msgr. Joseph P. O'Dea, who gave the invocation; Clayton K. Yeutter, chairman of the Republican National Committee and former Secretary of Agriculture; and Carla A. Hills, U.S. Trade Representative. The Secretary referred to Representatives E "Kika" de la Garza and Sidney R. Yates; Senators Patrick J. Leahy and Richard G. Lugar; and his wife, Evelyn.

Nomination of Patricia F. Saiki To Be Administrator of the Small Business Administration

March 12, 1991

The President today announced his intention to nominate Patricia F. Saiki, of Hawaii, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration. She would succeed Susan S. Engeleiter.

From 1986 to 1990 Congresswoman Saiki served as the United States Representative for the 1st District of Hawaii in Washington, DC. Prior to this Congresswoman Saiki served as the chairman of the Republican Party of Hawaii, 1983–1985. In addition,

Congresswoman Saiki served in the Hawaii State Legislature as a State senator, 1974–1982, and as a State representative, 1968–1974. Congresswoman Saiki has also served as a junior and senior high school teacher for 12 years in Hawaii.

Congresswoman Saiki graduated from the University of Hawaii at Manoa (B.A., 1952). She was born May 28, 1930, in Hilo, HI. Congresswoman Saiki is married, has five children, and resides in Alexandria, VA.

Appointment of Spencer E. Geissinger as Special Assistant to the President for Presidential Press Advance

March 12, 1991

The President today announced the appointment of Spencer E. Geissinger as Special

Assistant to the President for Presidential Press Advance at the White House in