

ROGER ERICKSON'S DEPARTURE FROM THE WCCO GOOD MORNING SHOW

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to Roger Erickson, one of Minnesota's special radio personalities, as he steps down from hosting WCCO Radio's Good Morning Show. Although Roger Erickson is not retiring, as of February 1, 1996, after 35 years on the WCCO Station Good Morning Show, he will hand over control of the program to his new on-air partner, Dave Lee.

Just a few years ago, Charlie Boone, a long-time cohost, stepped out of this special Good Morning program and, in a way, Erickson's departure marks the end of an era. I have no doubt, based on the good talent of Dave Lee and the format, Good Morning will remain a Minnesota early morning tradition. But the warm surround sound of Roger Erickson's dulcet tone crooning "Good Morning" or school announcements will be missed.

Over the past three and a half decades, Roger Erickson has become a preeminent voice in Minnesota morning radio. Roger has relayed the news with insight and compassion and entertained us with stories and humorous sketches. His school closing announcements have become a Minnesota institution: Generations of children have listened breathlessly to Roger on cold winter mornings hoping to hear their school called. Roger's warmth, spontaneity, and imagination have earned him thousands of loyal listeners. Some conjecture has it that in his youth he was a character in a Charlie Brown comic strip.

Roger Erickson's radio shows have been popular not only because he is a gifted broadcaster, but because he truly understands Minnesota and the culture of subtle Scandinavian humor. Roger was raised on a farm in Winthrop and studied speech and theater at the University of Minnesota. He was determined to work for WCCO Radio and, in 1959, took a job as Bozo the Clown on WCCO-TV in Minneapolis to get his foot in the door at the station. Within 2 months he was offered a WCCO Radio job, and he has continued there ever since, enthraling local audiences with spoofs like "Minnesota Hospital," "Charlie's Cafe Mediocore," "Air Lutefiska," and, most recently, fishing stories from two characters, Gill and Finn.

WCCO Radio prides itself on its Good Neighbor approach to broadcasting and Roger Erickson exemplifies the very best of the Good Neighbor tradition. Although we will miss hearing Roger's voice every day on the Good Morning Show, we are pleased he is continuing his work at WCCO in other capacities and wish him the very best in all his endeavors.

[From the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, Jan. 4, 1996]

NO MORE SCHOOL CLOSINGS FOR ERICKSON AS
HE LEAVES COHOST ROLE AT WCCO

(By Noel Holston)

Shouldn't there be an honorary school closing or something?

WCCO Radio's Roger Erickson says he has had enough of the early-to-bed, early-to-rise lifestyle that's been his for almost 35 years. He plans to give up his cohost role on 'CCO's "Good Morning Show" on Feb. 1.

Erickson will continue to participate in prerecorded "Good Morning" features, such as the "Minnesota Hospital" spoofs. He'll still do personalized plugs for certain advertisers and work on Saturdays with Charlie Boone. But he's handing over the helm of the weekday show to Dave Lee, who has been part of it for the past four years.

"I'll still be around the station four or five days a week," Erickson said Wednesday. "I may even do some live stuff occasionally."

"I won't be doing school closings, my one claim to fame," he added.

Erickson said he had been talking with general manager Jim Gustafson for some time about cutting back. "Roger actually wanted to make this change sooner, but he graciously agreed to wait until now," Gustafson said.

Erickson lists his age at 47, but that's in Jack Benny years. He's actually closer to 67, and he concedes that his wife, Margaret, has been after him for years to make some adjustments that would allow him to stay up a little later than his usual 7:30 or 8 p.m.

Erickson said he has never seen "ER," let alone "Late Show with David Letterman."

"I hear there are people who eat dinner as late as 6 o'clock," he said. "Is that true?"

"You really don't have a life at night," he continued, more seriously. "I know I'm not the only one. I know there are a whole lot of people doing a variety of jobs who have those kind of hours, so I'm not going to sit here and complain. I've had just a great run. I've loved doing that morning show."

Erickson, born and raised in Winthrop, Minn., studied theater at the University of Minnesota.

He gushes about the great early training he got doing radio drama for campus station KUOM-AM.

Erickson left a Stillwater radio station in 1959 to take his first job in Minneapolis, which wasn't as one would guess, at the Good Neighbor of the North—or even on radio.

"I auditioned at WCCO about 2,000 times," Erickson recalled. "I knew it was where I wanted to be, but I'm sure that, like most radio stations, they listened to the tape and then they put it aside. So I never got a call. And then the Bozo opportunity came up."

The Bozo opportunity?

Erickson said the original Bozo the Clown, Chicago broadcaster Larry Harmon, syndicated his show's format to TV stations around the country, which had only to hire a live clown to talk to kids and introduce the provided cartoons.

"I thought, 'This is the opportunity I'm looking for. I'm going to go into [radio] through the back door. I'm going to go in through television.'"

Erickson auditioned to be Bozo at WCCO-TV, Channel 4, and got the job. Two months later, the radio station offered him a job as well.

After a couple of years of night work, WCCO teamed Erickson with Maynard Speece ("a great storyteller who regularly challenged the parameters of Minnesota taste") on the 5 to 7 a.m. shift and with Charlie Boone in the afternoons.

"I would run over [to Channel 4] between 7 and 9 and put on the [Bozo] makeup and the costume and do some live spots for maybe Hostess Twinkies, take the makeup off, run back," Erickson said. "Charlie and I would start working on our afternoon show, work up to 1 o'clock, go on the air 1 to 3. About 3:30, I go back over to television, prepare the Bozo show, which went from 4:30 to 5. And at least once or twice a week, I'd visit a store as Bozo the Clown, with about a thousand kids lined up. And I wouldn't have had it any other way. It was fantastic."

Boone and Erickson eventually became the morning team, and their weekday partner-

ship lasted until 1992, when Boone cut back his hours. They reigned supreme in the mornings for almost three decades, challenged only by the Knapp and Donuts team on KSTP-FM in the '80s and finally edged out in, the '90s by Tom Barnard's morning crew on KORS-FM. The "Good Morning Show" remains one of WCCO's strengths.

Erickson dropped out of Monday mornings last fall, a move designed to lighten his workload and give heir apparent Lee an opportunity to flex some different muscles.

"I feel very comfortable leaving now," Erickson said. "It's in good hands."

ENDING COLA INEQUITY

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue of great importance to our Nation's military retirees: COLA equity.

The thousands of veterans and military retirees in my district have repeatedly asked that the inequity in COLA's for military and Federal civilians be ended—most recently during a veterans' town hall meeting I held last week.

This House has been unprecedented in dedicating itself toward ending the problem of inequity in military cost of living adjustments for military retirees. Early last year, legislation was introduced by my colleague, Mr. JIM MORAN, to end COLA inequity. The House also included a provision ending the disparity in COLA's in the budget reconciliation bill—a provision which, unfortunately, was removed by the Senate. In response, my Republican colleague, Mr. BILL YOUNG, introduced a new, fast-track bill to accomplish the same task. I am proud to have cosponsored both Mr. YOUNG's and Mr. MORAN's bills, and I applaud the tenacity with which the House leadership has pursued this important matter.

A provision to end the COLA inequity problem was included in the conference report of the Department of Defense authorization bill, which the House approved today. While I strongly supported the provision, I could not support the entire bill, a bill which mandated a \$7 million increase in defense spending over the President's original budget.

This spending increase comes at a time when other Federal programs—especially programs serving veterans—are suffering from serious budget cuts. For example, last year's Veterans Affairs budget, which provides for medical care for millions of veterans and military retirees and the construction and improvement of VA medical facilities, was cut by nearly \$1 billion from 1994. At the very least, we cannot speak about mutual sacrifice in ending the deficit at the same time that we actually increase spending in defense.

I will continue to support the House's legislative efforts to remove the COLA inequity once and for all. Our Nation's military retirees deserve no less.

OUR 2 CENTS' WORTH

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the first day workplace and civil rights

laws have been applied to this body. Now Congress is required to play by the same rules as everyone else.

But there is still at least one special exception the Congressional Accountability Act did not eliminate: Congress gets paid during Federal shutdowns while other Federal employees do not.

We can clear up this matter by passing H.R. 2658, a bill I introduced which would suspend Member's salaries during Federal shutdowns and furloughs. It is only fair that Congress be treated like every other Federal employee. If we are serious about playing by the same rules that govern everyone else, we need to pass this now.

On January 3, 1996, Carol Ann Rinzler and Perry Luntz wrote an excellent and eloquent article for the New York Times which accurately describes this problem. I have enclosed it below so all of my colleagues can better understand the magnitude of this issue:

[From the New York Times, Jan. 3, 1996]

OUR 2 CENTS' WORTH

(By Carol Ann Rinzler and Perry Luntz)

Almost exactly a year ago, Congress passed the Congressional Accountability Act, a much ballyhooed measure that requires the House and Senate to abide by the workplace and civil rights laws they enact for the rest of us. Alas, like so many things in life, this long-overdue legislation turns out to be less than meets the eye.

In an effort to minimize the effects of the Government shutdown on their constituents, Republicans in the House proposed last week that furloughed Federal employees go back to work without being paid, surely a new idea in free-market, conservative economics.

Afterward, someone asked Representative Tom DeLay of Texas, the House majority whip, whether he would consider giving up his own salary during the crisis. No way, said Mr. DeLay, explaining that, like every other member of Congress, he isn't a Federal employee—he is a "constitutional officer."

Well, we've reread our copy of the Constitution, and frankly the distinction seems a bit arcane to us.

True, members of Congress are specifically mentioned in the Constitution, Article I, Section 6 says that "Senators and Representatives shall receive a compensation for their services, to be ascertained by law and paid out of the Treasury of the United States." Cabinet members and Federal judges also get a mention, later on, but other workers—curators at the Smithsonian, say—do not.

But every Federal paycheck originates in an appropriation requiring money from the Treasury, whose funds come, in large part, from income taxes. That should give everyone of us the inalienable right to put in our 2 cents. Or to take it out.

Members of the House and Senate earn a base salary of \$133,600 a year (those in leadership positions get more.) And don't forget the generous benefit package: life insurance, health insurance, per diem travel and a nifty pension. Mr. DeLay's base salary alone costs each of America's more than 115 million individual taxpayers 1.2 cents a year.

As conscientious citizens, we have always paid our taxes, regardless of our political gripes. Even though one of us was tear-gassed in 1971 by an overzealous guard at the Nixon White House, protecting it from throngs of balding, middle-aged Vietnam War protesters and their children, the Internal Revenue Service got paid the following year anyway.

This time, however, we plan to draw a line in the sand. Having voted to obey its own

laws, members of Congress should be man (or woman) enough to live up to that requirement. Before Tom DeLay votes for trimming Medicare, he should whittle down his own Government-financed health insurance. If he expects Federal workers to show up for free, so should he.

Until then, he can forget our helping to pay his salary. Come April 15, our joint tax return will be 2 cents short. That ought to send a message: keeping Congress in line is a hard job, but somebody has to do it.

COMMENDATION FOR THE HONORABLE EDWARD J. BLAKE

HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Honorable Edward J. Blake, who is retiring from the Court of Common Pleas on January 31, 1996.

Judge Blake was born in Philadelphia on May 18, 1926, to Philip and Agnes Blake, and he was graduated from Saint Joseph's Preparatory High School in June 1944. From August 1944, to January 1946, he attended the Pennsylvania Maritime Academy, and was thereafter commissioned as an Ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserve. In September 1946, Judge Blake entered the prestigious Saint Joseph's College and earned a bachelor of science degree upon his graduation in May 1950.

Following his graduation, Judge Blake volunteered for active military service during the Korean war. As a damage control officer on the U.S.S. *Sutherland*, he participated in the Inchon invasion in September 1950. Judge Blake was honorably discharged from active duty in 1951, but he remained a member of the Reserve fleet and eventually attained the high rank of lieutenant commander before his discharge from the reserves in 1972.

Judge Blake's legal career was just as distinguished as his military achievements. Judge Blake attended the University of Pennsylvania Law School where he was to become class president. After graduating with honors, Judge Blake was appointed chief law clerk to the Court of Common Pleas No. 2, a position he held until 1962. From 1962 until 1964, he served as chief deputy court administrator of the court, and court administrator from 1964 until 1974.

In 1966, during his tenure as court administrator, the Court of Common Pleas entered the electronic age with the implementation of a computer system. As a direct consequence of his efforts, the court's ability to manage its caseload substantially improved, and the results were published in Computer Streamlines Caseload at Philadelphia Common Pleas Court, which Judge Blake coauthored.

Gov. Milton J. Schapp appointed Judge Blake to the bench of the Common Pleas in 1971, and he was elected in full term on November 6, 1973. In 1983 and 1993, Judge Blake was retained by the voters of Pennsylvania for succeeding terms in office.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court appointed Judge Blake as administrative judge of the trial division of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County on April 11, 1986, and during his tenure, the disposition of cases im-

proved even though the filing rate for civil cases increased dramatically.

On December 18, 1990, Judge Blake was elected as president judge. During his term of office as president judge, the criminal section of the trial division of the Court of Common Pleas was finally relocated to the newly completed Criminal Justice Center. This was a long-term project which was conceived, and nurtured due primarily to the efforts of Judge Blake.

Judge Blake's accomplishments, as a dedicated officer in the Army and a distinguished judge in the courtroom, has earned him respect and praise from his peers. I join his family and friends in wishing him an enjoyable retirement.

HONORING THE 85TH BIRTHDAY OF WILLARD MUNGER

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today I want to honor Minnesota State Representative, Willard Munger, who is 85 years young and marking his 40th year as a member of the Minnesota Legislature. Willard is a Minnesota original—a Minnesota natural resource—whose work honors his family, the State of Minnesota, and our Nation.

Willard Munger represents the best of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party's tradition of service to the State of Minnesota. He is currently tied with former Representative Day as the longest-serving member of the House and he has no intention of retiring now. The Munger vision and tenacity have shaped our State and generations of lawmakers. I'm proud of the 6 years I served in the Minnesota House of Representatives with Willard Munger. Willard Munger, as a sage and chairman, introduced me to the task and role of environmental lawmaker. What a teacher and what a friend Willard Munger was to me and past, present, and future generations of lawmakers.

Willard Munger reminds us again and again of our stewardship responsibilities. He established a pragmatic proactive progressive public service tradition and standard of public interest decisions that are sustained by sound science—both political and natural science. Willard first was the conscience speaking out courageously against powerful interests and finally a fiery new chairman. Today his advocacy remains constant. He is not complacent, but is rightfully viewed as mainstream but the careful work on law and policy that he has written and helped enact and will continue to advance.

Willard was one of the first people to raise questions about the use of pesticides, PCBs, and mercury. He began addressing issues like recycling, energy conservation, nuclear power, wetlands, soil erosion, environmentally safe mining practices, and hazardous waste long before these policy matters became politically popular.

Willard Munger's environmental vision has helped make Minnesota a natural leader in the areas of natural resource conservation and protection. Among his achievements are the enactment of the Minnesota Environmental