

well-known and well-respected man. New Hampshire has always been fortunate to have great law enforcement agents, and Mr. Monier exemplifies this ideal. I am proud of his achievements and his long and honorable commitment to law enforcement. I would like to wish Chief Monier, along with his wife Sandra and their two teenage sons, the best of luck as he embarks on this new stage in his life. It is an honor to represent you in the United States Senate.●

A TRIBUTE TO RUSSELL BAKER

● Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, Thomas Carlyle remarked, "A well-written Life is almost as rare as a well-spent one." Carlyle could have written these words, if construed as a double entendre, about my rare, dear friend, Russell Baker. Baker's last "Observer" column appeared in the New York Times this past Christmas, ending a 36-year run. Over the course of some 3 million words, by his own reckoning, Russell Baker has displayed grace, gentle wit, decency, and profound insight into the human condition.

Nearly fifteen years ago, I stated that Russell Baker has been just about the sanest observer of American life that we've had. He has been gentle with us, forgiving, understanding. He has told us truths in ways we have been willing to hear, which is to say he has been humorous . . . on the rare occasion he turns to us with a terrible visage of near rage and deep disappointment, we do well to listen all the harder.

He leaves a huge hole I doubt any other journalist can fill. As Boston Globe columnist Martin F. Nolan observed last month, "the most bathetic braggarts and most lubricated louts among us never thought we were as good or as fast as Russell Baker."

A life well-spent? He's a patriot, having served as a Navy flyer during World War II. For nearly fifty years, he has been married to his beloved Miriam. They have three grown children. His career has taken him from the Baltimore Sun's London Bureau to the Times' Washington Bureau. He has covered presidential campaigns, and he has accompanied Presidents abroad. He has met popes, kings, queens—and common people, too, for whom he has such enormous and obvious empathy. And now he is the welcoming presence on Mobil Masterpiece Theatre.

A life well-written? The Washington Post's Jonathan Yardley calls Russell Baker "a columnist's columnist," writing, "Baker broke his own mold. He was, simply and utterly, sui generis." I would not use the past tense, because I doubt Russell Baker is done putting pen to paper. But the sentiment is spot on.

A life well-written? Baker has won two Pulitzer Prizes—one in 1979 for Distinguished Commentary and another in 1983 for his 1982 autobiography, "Growing Up." He has written thirteen other books and edited The Norton Book of Light Verse and his own book

of American humor. Russell Baker isn't just one of the best newspaper writers around, as Yardley puts it; he is "one of the best writers around. Period."

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Russell Baker's last regular "Observer" column entitled "A Few Words at the End" (New York Times, December 25, 1998) appear in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD following my remarks. I further ask unanimous consent that Martin F. Nolan's column, "A Journalist, a Gentleman," (Boston Globe, December 9, 1998) and Jonathan Yardley's column, "Russell Baker: A Columnist's Columnist," (Washington Post, January 4, 1999) also appear in the RECORD following my remarks.

[From the Boston Globe, December 9, 1998]

A JOURNALIST, A GENTLEMAN
(By Martin F. Nolan, Globe Staff)

SAN FRANCISCO.—American journalism has marinated in wretched excess in 1998, and the year closes with the ultimate deprivation and indignity. This month, Russell Baker files his final column for The New York Times.

For readers, this means losing that rare sense of anticipation, glancing at a byline as a guarantee. Baker's byline delivers good writing, good humor, and a ruthless honesty about himself. He does not bluff or pontificate. Readers know: Character counts. Russ Baker's sensibilities have enriched the op-ed page of the Times since 1962, longer than any other columnist on that newspaper.

Ink-stained wretches still in harness will miss him as a role model, which in journalism means an object of fierce and unrelenting envy. The green-eyed monster squats daily over every newsroom word processor, presiding over pointless arguments: "I may not be good, but I'm fast" vs. "I may not be fast, but I'm good." But the most pathetic braggarts and most lubricated louts among us never thought we were as good or as fast as Russell Baker.

He has written 3 million words for the "Observer" column, few of them out of place. His lasting contribution to American letters was "Growing Up," his 1982 memoir, which ignored politicians to focus on his mother, Lucy, who hectored him about "gumption" and often said, "Don't be a quitter, Russell."

He's hardly that. He began reporting for the Baltimore Sun in 1947, as he wrote, "studying the psychology of cops, watching people's homes burn" while trolling the same precincts as H.L. Mencken 50 years earlier. Instead of Mencken's bile, he infused his prose with bemusement. He moved from street reporter to rewrite with no illusions: "I knew that journalism was essentially a task of stringing together seamlessly an endless series of clichés." Gulp. Also ouch.

A profile in The Washingtonian this year quoted Calvin Trillin on Baker as a 1950s guy: "No complaining, no dancing in the end zone." One lesson of "Growing Up" is that war and depression are more character-building than peace and prosperity, so Baker sought no slack and no other short cuts, which were notoriously unavailable at the Washington bureau of The Times, which he joined in 1954.

"In those days plain English was under suspicion at the Times," he once recalled. "Many stories read as if written by a Henry James imitator with a bad hangerover. Incomprehensible English was accepted as evidence of the honest, inarticulate, reporter; plain English bothered people."

But the copy desk yielded. Because Baker knew the difference between "disinterested"

and "uninterested," because he could navigate the perilous waters between "flaunt" and "flout," his news stories penetrated the philistine phalanx with lines like: "Senator Everett M. Dirksen, the Illinois Republican and orator, looking Byronically disheveled . . ."

Such a phrase would vanish in the hyena cacophony that passes for political discourse on television today. It is all the more fitting that Baker has become a TV star as host of "Masterpiece Theatre." In 1993, when PBS searched for Alistair Cooke's successor, Christopher Lydon and other lobbied heroically for Baker, one of the best-read reporters ever to meet a deadline.

Baker admired his fellow Virginian, Murray Kempton, the columnist who set out in New York every day to take the luck of the day. Writing in retirement, Baker hopes to "take the luck of the year."

In an ancient newspaper joke, a butler informs his employer that "Some reporters are here to see you, sir, and a gentleman from The Times (or Transcript or Tribune)." He may still identify with the typical Washington correspondent of his day, a dirty-fingernailed hustler "who services a string of small papers in the Gadsden Purchase." But Russell Baker adorns this increasingly rude trade because he is a true gentleman.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 4, 1999]

RUSSELL BAKER: A COLUMNIST'S COLUMNIST
(By Jonathan Yardley)

Christmas 1998 was bright and beautiful here on the East Coast, but the happy day also brought a great loss. The announcement of it was made that morning on the Op-Ed page of the New York Times, under the chilling headline, "A Few Words at the End," and under the byline of Russell Baker.

The headline told the story, and the opening of Baker's column confirmed it. "Since it is Christmas," he wrote, "a day on which nobody reads a newspaper anyhow, and since this is the last of these columns titled 'Observer' which have been appearing in the Times since 1962 . . ." at which point it was all I could do to keep on reading. But read I did, out loud, right to the end—"Thanks for listening for the past three million words"—when I could only blurt out: "Well, my world just got a lot smaller."

That is no exaggeration. I cannot pretend to have read all 3 million of those words, for there were periods when my peregrinations up and down this side of the North American continent put me out of touch with the Times, but I read most of them and treasured every one. Baker's columns were the center of my life as a reader of newspapers, and it is exceedingly difficult to imagine what that life will be without them.

Thirty-six years! Has any American newspaper columnist maintained so high a standard of wit, literacy and intelligence for so long a time? Only two come to mind: H.L. Mencken and Walter Lippmann. But Mencken's columns for the Baltimore Evening Sun were on-and-off affairs, and Lippmann struggled through a long dry period during the 1950s before being brought back to life in the 1960s by the debate over the Vietnam War. Baker, by contrast, was, like that other exemplary Baltimorean Cal Ripkin Jr., as consistent and reliable as he was brilliant. For all those years he was my idea of what a journalist should be, and I strived—with precious little success—to live up to this example.

Not that I tried to imitate him, or not that I was aware of doing so. One of the many remarkable things about Baker is that, unlike Mencken or Lippmann—or Baker's old boss, James Reston, or Dorothy Thompson, or Drew Pearson, or Dave Barry—he really has

no imitators. Other journalists may envy what he did, but in a business where imitation is the sincerest form of self-promotion, Baker broke his own mold. He was, simply and utterly, *sui generis*.

This made him, in the cozy and self-congratulatory world of journalists, odd man out. His colleagues and competitors may have admired and respected him, but few understood him. While they chased around after ephemeral scoops and basked in the reflected glory of the famous and powerful, Baker wrote what he once called 'a casual column without anything urgent to tell humanity,' about aspects of life that journalists commonly regard as beneath what they fancy to be their dignity. Looking back to the column's beginnings, Baker once wrote:

'At the Times in those days the world was pretty much confined to Washington news, national news and foreign news. Being ruled off those turfs seemed to leave nothing very vital to write about, and I started calling myself the Times' nothing columnist. I didn't realize at first that it was a wonderful opportunity to do a star turn. Freed from the duty to dilate on the global predicament of the day, I could build a grateful audience among readers desperate for relief from the Times' famous gravity.'

That is precisely what he did. As he noticed in his valedictory column, Baker's years as a gumshoe reporter immunized him from 'columnists' tendency to spend their time with life's winners and to lead lives of isolation from the less dazzling American realities.' Instead of writing self-important thumb-suckers—'The Coming Global Malaise,' 'Nixon's Southern Strategy,' 'Whither Cyprus?'—he concentrated on ordinary life as lived by ordinary middle-class Americans in the second half of the 20th century. He wrote about shopping at the supermarket, about car breakdowns and mechanics who failed to remedy them, about television and what it told us about ourselves, about children growing up and parents growing older.

Quite surely it is because Baker insisted on writing about all this stuff that failed to meet conventional definitions of 'news' that not until 1979 did his fellow journalists get around to giving him the Pulitzer Prize for commentary. Probably, too, it is because he insisted on being amused by the passing scene and writing about in an amusing way. He was only occasionally laugh-out-loud amusing in the manner of Dave Barry—who is now, with Baker's retirement, the one genuinely funny writer in American newspapers—but he was always witty and wry, and he possessed a quality of which I am in awe: an ability to ingratiate himself with readers while at the same time making the most mordant judgments on their society and culture.

There were times in the late years of his column when mordancy seemed to hover at the edge of bitterness. This struck me as inexplicable, but the inner life of another person is forever a mystery, and in any event there is much in fin de siècle America about which to be bitter. But mostly Baker dealt in his stock in trade: common-sensical wisdom, wry skepticism, transparent decency. He wasn't just the best newspaper writer around, he was one of the best writers around. Period.

[From the New York Times, December 25, 1998]

A FEW WORDS AT THE END (By Russell Baker)

Since it is Christmas, a day on which nobody reads a newspaper anyhow, and since this is the last of these columns titled 'Observer' which have been appearing in The Times since 1962, I shall take the otherwise

inexcusable liberty of talking about me and newspapers. I love them.

I have loved them since childhood when my Uncle Allen regularly brought home Hearst's New York Journal-American with its wonderful comics, Burris Jenkins cartoons and tales of rich playboys, murderous playgirls and their love nests. At that age I hadn't a guess about what a love nest might be, and didn't care, and since something about 'love nest' sounded curiously illegal, I never asked an adult for edification.

On Sunday's Uncle Allen always brought The New York Times and read himself to sleep with it. Such a dismal mass of gray paper was of absolutely no interest to me. It was Katzenjammer Kids and Maggie and Jiggs of the King Features syndicate with whom I wanted to spend Sunday.

At my friend Harry's house I discovered the New York tabloids. Lots of great pictures. Dick Tracy! Plenty of stories about condemned killers being executed, with emphasis what they had eaten for their last meal, before walking—the last mile! The tabloids left me enthralled by the lastness of things.

Inevitably, I was admitted to practice the trade, and I marveled at the places newspapers could take me. They took metro to suburbs on sunny Saturday afternoons to witness the mortal results of family quarrels in households that kept pistols. They took me to hospital emergency rooms to listen to people die and to ogle nurses.

They took me to the places inhabited by the frequently unemployed and there taught me the smell of poverty. In winter there was also the smell of deadly kerosene stoves used for heating, though there tendency to set bedrooms on fire sent the morgue a predictable stream of customers every season.

The memory of those smells has been a valuable piece of equipment during my career as a columnist. Columnists' tendency to spend their time with life's winners and to lead lives of isolation from the less dazzling American realities makes it too easy for us sometimes to solve the nation's problems in 700 words.

Newspapers have taken me into the company of the great as well as the greatly celebrated. On these expeditions I have sat in the Elysee Palace and gazed on the grandeur that was Charles de Gaulle speaking as from Olympus. I have watched Nikita Khrushchev, fresh from terrifying Jack Kennedy inside a Vienna Embassy, emerge to clown with the press.

I have been apologized to by Richard Nixon. I have seen Adlai Stevenson, would-be President of the United States, shake hands with a department-store dummy in Florida.

I have been summoned on a Saturday morning to the Capitol of the United States to meet with Lyndon Johnson, clad in pajamas and urgently needing my advice on how to break a civil-rights filibuster. I have often been played for a fool like this by other interesting men and, on occasion, equally interesting women.

Pope John XXIII included me in an audience he granted the press group en route to Turkey, Iran and points east with President Eisenhower. The Pope's feet barely reached the floor and seemed to dance as he spoke.

Newspapers took me to Westminster Abbey in a rental white tie and topper to see Queen Elizabeth crowned and to Versailles in another rental white-tie-and-tails rig to share a theater evening with the de Gaulles and the John F. Kennedys.

Thanks to newspapers, I have made a four-hour visit to Afghanistan, have seen the Taj Mahal by moonlight, breakfasted at dawn on lamb and couscous while sitting by the marble pool of a Moorish palace in Morocco and one picked up a persistent family of fleas in the Balkans.

In Iran I have ridden in a press bus over several miles of Oriental carpets with which the Shah had ordered the street covered between airport and town to honor the visiting Eisenhower, a man who, during a White House news conference which I attended in shirtsleeves, once identified me as 'that man that's got the shirt on.'

I could go on and on, and probably will somewhere sometime, but the time for this enterprise is up. Thanks for listening for the past three million words.●

ROBERT DAVID SMITH

● Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise today to commend Robert David Smith for his commitment to excellence in academics and as a citizen. Robert attended Gilmer High School in his hometown of Ellijay, Georgia. While in High School, Robert was named the Class of 1996 Valedictorian, 1996 USA Today All-Academic Team Scholar, winner of the 1994 National Seiko Youth Challenge, Georgia Scholar, National Merit Finalist, and Senior Class President. He also received the 1995 Governor's Proclamation, the 1995 and 1996 D.A.R. Good Citizen Award and the rank of Eagle Scout.

In college, Robert has continued his commitment to academic excellence. Attending Harvard University, Robert is in his Junior year majoring in Economics. He has made Dean's List and been named a Harvard College Scholar.

Robert's commitment to excellence has also been extended to the community. At home, he has served on the Gilmer County Comprehensive Planning Committee which analyzed its own environmental and financial problems. He also volunteered for the Cox Creek Project which worked to solve local sewage and landfill problems in Gilmer County. Finally, as a student at Harvard, Robert participates in the Park Street Project where he serves as a tutor at a local middle school, helping students excel.

Once again, Mr. President, I would like to thank Robert David Smith for his commitment to academic and civic excellence. As we in Congress discuss possible reforms of our educational system, certainly we can use Robert as a model for the type of student we should be producing in our Nation's schools.●

TRIBUTE TO LES CHITTENDEN

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the contribution of an outstanding Marylander, Mr. Les Chittenden. I hope my colleagues will find inspiration in this story of devotion and persistence.

Les and his wife Mary lived in an apartment building in Columbia, Maryland where handicapped access and parking were limited. When Mary became ill and required the use of a wheelchair, the Chittendens discovered just how inadequate the handicapped facilities at their building were.

Mr. President, Les Chittenden was not content to simply accept the situation. He fought to change it. His devotion to his wife of 36 years motivated