

UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE AT
ISLIP, NEW YORK

• Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, on October 16 the new United States Courthouse at Islip, New York, was dedicated in a splendid ceremony at which the distinguished architect Richard Meier spoke, in the company of Robert A. Peck, the singularly gifted Commissioner of the Public Buildings Service of the General Services Administration.

The ceremony was splendid for the simple reason that the courthouse is magnificent. Perhaps the finest public building of our era. Certainly the finest courthouse. And it could never have happened save for the Design Excellence Program Commissioner Peck has put in place with his characteristic compound of genius and persistence.

Major Peck, as he is known to his friends (he was a Green Beret officer), is a public servant of unexampled ability and achievement. His record is known to all. Some number of years ago when he was counsel to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, he put together for the Committee a slide show consisting of photographs of early public buildings in early America. He did not plead his case; he made it. The buildings exude a confidence and expectation that clearly explain the endurance of American democracy. I recall in particular a white wooden-frame courthouse in Rhode Island. Graceful, serene, unthreatening yet equally forceful. Of a sudden it came to us. As nowhere else on earth, the courthouse is a symbol of government in the United States. Go to London, go to Paris. There are courthouses, or at least courtrooms there. If you can find them. Amidst the cathedrals and the palaces, and to be sure, the buildings of the legislature. Here it is different. The courthouse square is where folk gather.

The Nation owes Robert A. Peck more than it will ever know. But this would hardly matter to him. As the time approaches when he will leave government, he takes with him the knowledge of his singular public service.

I ask that Major Peck's address on the occasion of the courthouse dedication be included in the RECORD at this point, along with a brief summary of his service.

The material follows:

ROBERT A. PECK, COMMISSIONER, GSA PUBLIC BUILDING SERVICE, 16 OCTOBER 2000

Building partners, GSA colleagues, and distinguished guests; may it please the court: This is a fine day, a great day for this Court, for New York, for Long Island and for us in the General Services Administration. But more important still, we might well someday regard this as the day that marked the full flowering of a renaissance in public building in America.

At the turn of another century, at this season exactly two hundred years ago, the White House and the Capitol were occupied, if not quite completed, in Washington. It is not by chance that they quickly became the architectural icons of American democracy.

George Washington and Thomas Jefferson intended them to be just that. They conscientiously sought to erect Federal buildings of a scale, style and quality that would reflect the noble origins and intentions of the new government.

And so began a tradition of American public building that would, for a century and a half, produce some of the finest buildings in America. The federal government built courthouses, post offices, land offices and custom houses all over the expanding nation. You can see photos of Federal buildings of imposing stature, constructed of enduring materials and elegantly detailed, sitting on unpaved streets in what were literally one-horse towns. The buildings simultaneously planted the flag and put the towns on the map. The government was proud to build them and the townspeople were proud to have them. States and cities followed suit with stately civic buildings, malls, and memorials.

Then, after World War II, something happened. As the scale of government increased, public buildings diminished. Not in size, but in accomplishment. Just as GSA was being founded, fifty-one years ago, public architecture fell into decline and, quickly, into deserved disrepute.

As in so many other things, there was a brief shining moment for public architecture in the Kennedy Administration. Drafted by a then-special assistant to the Secretary of Labor, one Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a set of Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture appeared from nowhere. Certainly no one had asked for them. The Principles called for federal architecture which is "distinguished and which will reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of the American National Government." But the Kennedy era produced few buildings and, in any event, the spark didn't ignite.

GSA would try on occasion. I was witness to one noteworthy hearing in the first or second year of Senator MOYNIHAN's first term in which a GSA official, pointing to a tepid design, said the government was trying to put the poetry back in its architecture. Senator MOYNIHAN advised, "better try to learn the prose first."

Look at this building. Walt Whitman does come to mind, or perhaps Mozart or Copland, if architecture is indeed frozen music.

GSA is now some forty buildings into the largest public buildings program since that of the 1930's. We are turning out building after building, mostly courthouses but also office buildings, border stations and even laboratories, that meet the test of the Guiding Principles.

GSA's Design Excellence Program has changed our expectations for public architecture. Members of Congress from both parties and local community leaders now demand quality from us. Many cities are following suit and are hiring the best designers they can find to build new civic structures, in so doing reviving their own traditions born in the City Beautiful movement of a century ago.

Inside GSA, Design Excellence has spurred us to demand higher quality of ourselves, not just in architecture but in all that we do. We aspire to build historic landmarks for the next generation. Just as so many Federal buildings of the 19th and early 20th century have become local landmarks that citizens rally to defend, so we are determined that our new buildings will stir affectionate and passionate defenders in the years to come.

Richard Meier's accomplishment here sets a mark that will be hard to surpass but that challenges us to accept nothing short of the inspirational when we build.

GSA in this Administration made a bold decision to pursue design excellence. All

praise is due to GSA's chief architect, Ed Feiner, a native of New York City and his GSA colleague, Marilyn Farley, who persevered through years of indifferent response inside GSA to become the architects of our Design Excellence process. In his New Yorker review of this building, Paul Goldberger said the GSA was a much more enlightened client for Richard Meier than was at least one other well-known client of his. To Ed and Marilyn go much of the credit for this.

We are fortunate to have as our clients in this, as in so many of our projects, the federal judiciary. They are not easy clients, as you might expect of those with lifetime tenure who are used to having the final say. But they are the best clients, because they care about the quality of the buildings in which they carry out perhaps the most sensitive function in our society. Judge Wexler has lived and breathed this building for a long, long time and we are all in his debt.

At these dedications, those of us who speak—the judges and the architects excluded—often have had little to do with the day to day agonies and triumphs of seeing a project like this to completion. So thanks to the GSA project managers, the construction managers, the architect's team and the builders, those who sat here in the construction trailers, who hammered out the details and who worked in the prose of budgets and schedules. And thanks to the construction workers, too often overlooked as we congratulate each other.

Again, thank you to Richard Meier. Your building is at once a structure that stirs emotion and embodies reason, a building that at once demonstrates the power of large ideas and proves, as Mies van der Rohe said, that god is in the details.

May I sound a few cautionary notes and, in this political season, petition for help? We have retained our way on public architecture only recently, to the enduring benefit of our people, our communities and our policy. But we could regress.

There are still some, not many, thankfully, who would limit budgets to such a degree that we would be putting up throw-away buildings. GSA has combined judicious and vigorous budget-setting with our design excellence procedures to make sure that we build with prudence as well as with grace.

There are some, again not many, who think GSA should build in a "traditional" style, whatever that means. At the turn of the last century, the federal government did decree an official style. As happens too frequently in government, what started out as a declaration in favor of a fresh idea remained in force so long that it prevented the government from keeping up with changing times. The Guiding Principles wisely forbade the government from having an official style and directed instead that the government take architectural direction from the best practitioners in the private design community. We need support in building buildings like this one, a striking and ennobling structure of and for the 21st century.

And finally, there is the nation's understandable concern with security. We must build buildings like this one, that intelligently and rationally counter likely and deterrable risks. We must not and need not wall off our public buildings and our public servants from the public they are intended to serve. We must not let the terrorists become our most influential architects.

Everyone in GSA who has had anything to do with this project will be proud as long as he or she lives that we had even a small role in giving New York and the nation this temple of democracy. We are proud to be building buildings worthy of the American people—none so worthy as this.

ROBERT A. PECK

Robert A. Peck was appointed Commissioner of the Public Buildings Service of the U.S. General Services Administration on December 26, 1995. The position dates in a direct line to the establishment of a Federal Office of Construction in 1853. As head of the Public Buildings Service, Bob Peck is in charge of asset management and design, construction, leasing, building operations, security and disposals for a real estate portfolio of more than 330 million square feet in more than 8,300 public and private buildings accommodating over one million workers. PBS owns or leases nearly all civilian Federal office space, courthouses and border stations and many laboratories and storage facilities. The PBS annual budget is approximately \$5.5 billion, nearly 90% of which is contracted to the private sector.

Mr. Peck has been a land use and real estate lawyer, real estate investment executive and vice president for government and public affairs at the American Institute of Architects.

In prior public service, Mr. Peck has worked at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Carter White House and the Federal Communications Commission. He was chief of staff to U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) and a counsel to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (where among his other duties was oversight of the Public Buildings Service). He was also a Special Forces (Green Beret) officer in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Mr. Peck received his B.A., cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, with distinction in economics, from the University of Pennsylvania in 1969 and his J.D. from Yale Law School in 1972. He has been a visiting lecturer in art history at Yale University and a visiting Loeb Fellow at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. In 1997, he was named an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects and in 2000 received a Corporate Real Estate Leadership award from Site Selection, the magazine of the International Development Research Council.

Bob Peck has been active in historic preservation and urban design, serving as president of the D.C. Preservation League and as a presidential appointee on the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the Federal design review board for the nation's capital. He has written and spoken extensively on preservation, urban planning, infrastructure investment and transportation. He is a member of the Board of Regents of the American Architectural Foundation and serves on the national advisory board of the Mayors Institute on City Design.●

GENERAL SCHOOMAKER

● Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, it is a privilege for me to join the Secretary of Defense in recognizing General Peter Schoomaker, a man whose lifetime of service commemorates the very spirit on which our great country was founded. General Schoomaker's distinguished military career will draw to a close on October 27, 2000, when he steps down from his position as Commander in Chief of the United States Special Operations Command.

General Schoomaker has always demonstrated a commitment to excellence and service. Since being commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1969, upon graduation from the University of Wyoming, his commitment to serve has provided him with the foundation of a

lifetime of success. He has served at all levels in conventional and special operations and participated in numerous contingency operations, ranging from Desert One in Iran through Uphold Democracy in Haiti. He currently shoulders the responsibility for all special operations of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, both active and reserve.

Clearly, General Schoomaker has been a pivotal and talented player on the national security stage, but his measure as a man goes beyond the profession at which he excels. General Schoomaker's quest for excellence began early when he was a defensive lineman for the University of Wyoming football team which won the 1967 Sugar Bowl. These memories rank high on his list of notable achievements, primarily because of the teamwork it took to succeed. Fostering a spirit of teamwork continues to be the guiding force in General Schoomaker's leadership philosophy, and his enduring legacy for the service epitomizes the concepts he learned long ago on the gridiron.

Mr. President, the people of Wyoming have been blessed with a long list of servicemen and women who are willing to put the needs of other in front of their own. Today, I have the opportunity to celebrate an adopted son of my home state, General Peter Schoomaker, a man who embodies the qualities of determination, self-sacrifice, and leadership.●

IN RECOGNITION OF DEBORAH V.H. COOK AND PATRICIA BUEKAMA

● Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Ms. Deborah V.H. Cook and Ms. Patricia Buekema for their 25 years of service to the Glen Ridge School System.

For the past 25 years, these outstanding educators have taught many grade levels and a countless number of students have benefitted from their instruction. As members of the Glen Ridge community, Ms. Cook and Ms. Buekema have demonstrated an extraordinarily high level of commitment and selflessness to which we should all strive to achieve.

However, the impact of their service reaches far beyond the classroom. Both Ms. Cook and Ms. Buekema have dedicated themselves to creating a supportive and productive environment for the youth of Glen Ridge. They have helped to shape the minds and encourage the spirit of these young individuals during a crucial stage of development in their lives.

Ms. Cook's and Ms. Buekema's accomplishments, throughout their years of service, reflect only a small portion of the many contributions they have made to the people of Glen Ridge. Their efforts have touched the lives of their students as well as those throughout their community.

They are an example of the professionalism that we look for in our educators, and the type of citizens that we hope to find in our neighborhoods,

which is why their dedication is to be recognized and commended.●

HONORING OF PHYLLIS E. THOMPSON

● Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a remarkable Nevadan, Phyllis Thompson. Phyllis has been a resident of Henderson, Nevada since 1951. On November 1, 2000, she will be receiving the Philanthropy Day Award from St. Rose Dominican Hospital. The Philanthropy Day Award honors individuals who embody volunteerism and have made significant civic and charitable contributions. There is no one more deserving of this honor than Phyllis Thompson.

Phyllis Thompson is a talented and tenacious businesswoman. She entered the construction business in the early 1970s, an all-male field at the time. She and her husband Charles started Basic Ready Mix with one truck, and she had to work nights as a waitress to make ends meet. Eventually, she was able to expand the business to 175 trucks. She sold the company in 1991, but she could not stay retired for long. In 1996, she founded Phyllis E. Thompson Companies, a commercial real estate firm, which she has built into an unequivocal success.

Not only has Phyllis Thompson accomplished a great deal in the business world, but she has also enjoyed success as a sportsman. She has been hunting trophy deer for twenty years and is a professional off-road racer. In 1997, she won the Nevada Prim 250, a 250 mile off-road race.

Throughout her extraordinary life, Phyllis Thompson's true devotion has been to family. She is the proud mother of two children, Lonny and Terri, and has been blessed with six grandchildren. In addition, her charitable work has been focused on helping families. St. Rose Dominican Hospital, the Salvation Army, Boys & Girls Clubs of Henderson, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Safe House, and Child Seekers are among the many organizations to which she has given so much. In fact, she was recognized in 1999 as Board Member of the Year by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Henderson.

Philanthropy Day, established in 1986, is observed every November to recognize the importance of philanthropy in our communities. It is a time to acknowledge the entire spectrum of services provided by the non-profit community, and recognize the profound effect that volunteerism and giving have on the fabric of society.

Phyllis Thompson embodies the spirit of Philanthropy Day. She has shared her success and good fortune through volunteerism and philanthropy. She sets a wonderful example for all of our citizens, selflessly giving of her time, talent and financial means to help others make the most of their lives. I thank her for their friendship and all that she has done for the citizens of Nevada.●