

And our friends across the aisle. . . . Senators ABRAHAM, ASHCROFT, GORTON, GRAMS, MACK, and ROTH.

It's an honor to have served with all of them. I wish them well in all of their future pursuits.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of all the Democratic Senators, I express our appreciation for the kind words about our friend CHUCK ROBB. I sent him a note after the election, and he, of course, in his typical fashion responded. But I so much appreciate the Democratic leader covering his extraordinary life. One thing the leader didn't mention is that he is really a son of the West. He was born in Arizona. Of course, he went to high school in Fairfax and did a great job there.

One reason I so admire CHUCK ROBB—and the leader touched upon that—is his military record. I have not served in the U.S. military. I look at CHUCK ROBB with so much admiration. He went to the jungles of Vietnam. He didn't have to go, but he did. Not only did he go there, but he served in combat and was given a medal for valor. That says it all about CHUCK ROBB.

CHUCK ROBB's service for the 12 years he has been in the Senate has been one of valor. We have asked him to take credit for things he did, and he would not take credit. We have asked him to come forward on issues in which maybe he just had some tangential involvement. He said: No, that is not my legislation; I am not going to do it.

He is a man of great integrity. As the leader indicated, he doesn't promote himself. Of course, he doesn't do that.

But the thing I admire about CHUCK ROBB more than any other—more than his public service and more than his military record—is how he treats and talks to his family. He has three daughters and a wonderful wife.

With a heavy heart, I look at CHUCK ROBB here on the Senate floor for one of the last times. My life is better because of CHUCK ROBB. He has made me look better personally. He is a man of great integrity and a man of character. I will never forget the things he has done for me personally.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I would like to thank Senator ROBB. He is truly one of the most honorable individuals I have ever met in my life. I thank him.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I will just take one minute to thank my friends and colleagues for their eloquent and very greatly appreciated words. I have never been very good at showing emotion. I am not very good at saying thank you. But I want you to know that your words, your friendship, your leadership and your example have always been appreciated well beyond my ability to express it.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be extended until 2:30 with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Massachusetts.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR CHUCK ROBB

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, during the last few moments, several of our colleagues gave tribute to our friend. He is my friend and is someone so many of us admire here in the Senate. He is someone who has made a difference in this body and this country with his deep commitment to public service.

Reference was made this afternoon to Senator ROBB and his service in Vietnam. He fought for our country and served in the Armed Forces. Because of his strong beliefs and commitments to the values of the Nation, he made it his responsibility to respond to the Nation's call.

This is a real reflection of the strong commitment and the basic integrity of this extraordinary Senator and friend. He fought in Vietnam for the values he believed in deeply. He came back to this country served as a distinguished Governor of a great State, the State of Virginia. And he continued that service in the Senate.

CHUCK ROBB was a neighbor of mine. We have lived as neighbors for a number of years. He and Lynda have been good and valued friends over a great many years.

I have enjoyed working with him in the area of education. He has a fierce passion to try to make sure every child in this country is going to have a good quality education. Even though he is not a member of the education committee, he mastered this subject and also provided very important leadership in it.

I think so much of what is included in this dual appropriations legislation—which we hope we will have an opportunity to address in these next several hours and days—is really a tribute to the strong stands he took on good quality education for the children not just of Virginia but the children of this country.

I think he was always concerned about the balance between the expenditures and what the economy could stand. He is in every respect a fiscal conservative. He believed deeply in making sure we had a budget that was going to reflect our values, but also that we were going to take care that our resources were going to be well spent in the national interest.

Finally, I want to mention an additional field where his leadership was

very much in evidence; that is, in knocking down the walls of discrimination in all of the forms and shapes that have been presented in recent years. That is a defining issue for our country. America will never be America until we free ourselves from all types and all forms of discrimination.

There was never a battle in any of the areas involving discrimination in which CHUCK ROBB was not a leader. I will miss him on this Senate floor.

I join with my other colleagues in paying tribute to his service to the Senate, but most importantly to his State and also to our Nation. He has a great opportunity in the future for continued service. I think all Members in this body wish him well and look forward to opportunities of work with him closely again.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

THE HISTORY OF OLDSMOBILE

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, today I rise to comment on a development that took place in my State this week. It was with great sadness that I heard of the phasing out of the Oldsmobile line of cars within the General Motors family. Over the last 105 years, Oldsmobile has been a Lansing, MI, and a State institution and, obviously, a national and international one as well. It was started 105 years ago when Ransom Eli Olds of Lansing, MI, teamed with Frank Clark, the son of a small carriage shop operator, to achieve what many believed impossible. They successfully produced a self-contained gasoline-powered carriage, and with it Oldsmobile was officially born in 1897.

Throughout its history, Oldsmobile has enjoyed a number of firsts: the first assembly line; and with the production of the curved dash, the first mass producer of gasoline cars; in 1905, two Oldsmobiles finished the very first transcontinental race from New York to Portland, OR, in 45 days; in 1940, models featured the Hydra-Matic drive, making this lineup the first vehicles with fully automatic transmissions; in 1966, Oldsmobile introduced the Toronado, the first modern-day front-wheel drive car; in 1974, that Toronado became the first American car to offer a driver's side airbag.

Millions of Americans have come to love their Oldsmobiles. An Olds convertible was the standard for transporting a Homecoming queen or a float parade when I was growing up. And an Oldsmobile sedan was the epitome of the middle-class family dream. All of this was made possible by the hard work and the commitment to affordable quality that was the hallmark of Oldsmobile in that division of General Motors.

On a personal level, I have a special stake in all of this, as well. Not only did I grow up in Lansing, MI, the home of Oldsmobile, but for almost 20 years my dad worked on the line at the Oldsmobile main assembly plant there. It is

where he got his start, where my family came to truly appreciate how much the automobile industry means, not just to families such as ours but to our State, and especially how much the Oldsmobile meant to Michigan—Lansing, in particular.

I am sad, therefore, to see the Oldsmobile go, as we have known it, but I am confident General Motors will continue to make quality, safe automobiles for generations to come. As we bring down the curtain on the Oldsmobile, I rise today to offer my praise to that company, to those who started it, and their families and descendants who still remain in the Lansing area and in Michigan; also, to all those workers who, as my father, worked over the years for that Oldsmobile division of General Motors. I think each and every one of them took to their jobs a great satisfaction, a commitment to hard work, and a tremendous pride in the craftsmanship that went into making the automobile for many generations one of this country's favorite lines of vehicles.

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

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I inquire of the Chair, are we still in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair informs the Senator from Michigan we are in a period of morning business until the hour of 2:30.

PROUD ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I will comment briefly on a matter of relevance both personally to me and to my State. Since the election, as a consequence of my defeat, I have heard from a number of people from the Arab American community, both in Michigan and across the United States. As a Lebanese American myself, I have been very proud to be, at least for the last several years, the only Arab American Member of this Chamber.

A number of folks from that community expressed their disappointment in the results of the campaign. I take the floor today to thank so many people who have been in touch, but also to make several points that I hope will be heard by members of the community, to be taken into account as they consider the results of this election, as well as the future.

First, I note that in recent years I believe the Arab American community has become a key part of the American political process. The participation of the community has continued to increase both in my State of Michigan as

well as across the country. Not only are people voting in greater numbers as a percentage of the community, and for many taking the first step of participating in the elections, but their activism in Michigan and other States has grown considerably. I take great pride in seeing that happen.

In addition, we have seen a number of Arab Americans rise to leadership positions at the local level of government all the way up to statewide offices. In the Congress itself we have several Members of Arab heritage on the House side who were elected in the most recent campaigns.

Much of this progress, I think, has translated into progress on issues of importance to the Arab American community in the last 6 years. I have been proud during my term in the Senate to have worked on behalf of a number of important issues relevant to the community. One has been to see the travel ban to Lebanon lifted in 1997, which has opened more opportunities for better relations between the United States and Lebanon, and also for more commercial activity between the two countries.

This Chamber passed a resolution decrying intolerance toward people of Islamic faith in this country, a much needed statement, I think, for the Congress to make so we can be on record consistently as opposing intolerance toward people of any religious faith. We have supported important programs that have affected the Middle East. One that we have worked on in our office with Senator FEINSTEIN and others is the Seeds of Peace Program, which I believe will have a long-term and positive impact on the relationships between countries in the Middle East, including Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Yemen, as well as the Palestinians.

I think the potential for the future is even greater. I think it is very likely in the area of public policy that the people from the Arab American community will rise and play an ever active role and a greater role, as they have done in other fields of endeavor. In America's business community, we have many Arab American leaders today who are heading up important companies from one end of the country to the other. In sports and entertainment and the arts, we likewise have seen Arab Americans excel. In education, the same is true. Indeed, the level of educational attainment by young people of Arab American background continues to be one of the most important components of the Arab American ethnic communities' contribution to the United States.

I am very proud of my heritage. I have talked to many other Members of this Chamber about my background over the years. I am glad to have helped in a small way—to have played a role in moving forward some of the policy objectives I mentioned a few minutes ago. I hope, to some extent, that has helped encourage others in their own communities, States, or even

perhaps at the Federal level to do so, as well.

Recently in Dearborn, MI, home to the largest concentration of Arab Americans in the United States, I was approached by a woman who had a young son in the seventh grade, saying how happy he was to know a Senator shared his Arab American heritage. I hope that in my brief career in the Senate maybe there are others who have similarly sparked an interest in government because they happen to be part of that same community to which I belong.

My message is to praise the community, especially, but also to say to any who have harbored a sense of disappointment with the results of the election, I hope that disappointment will not be long standing. It certainly isn't the case for myself. I encourage people in the community to continue to play an active role in politics. Obviously, our political process inevitably produces success and failure from election to election.

For people new to the process, sometimes they misunderstand and treat a setback as something that should discourage future involvement. I hope that across the Arab American community, and especially for those who first got active in the political process with this election, that they will continue to play an active role, even increase their involvement, and hopefully encourage others to do likewise. That would be invaluable to the community, and certainly from my point of view, it would be the preferable outcome.

My grandparents came a century ago from Lebanon, where they left behind everything to risk their fortunes on America. As is the case with people not just from the Arab American community but so many other immigrant communities, they came here with very little in the way of material possessions, but they came with a great deal of desire and energy and the hope that by working hard and playing by the rules they could make a contribution.

As I have said to the others on this floor in the past, they did not necessarily come here assuming they would have a grandson who would be in the Senate, but they wanted to live in a country where that was possible. Indeed, that is what our country always will be. And I think it always will. I am proud to have had the opportunity to fulfill, probably in the utmost way, the hopes that were brought here by my grandparents when they arrived.

I think, as I look back on my service in the Senate, perhaps more than anything else, will be the source of pride that I take with me as I leave the Chamber today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

SENATOR ABRAHAM

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I did want to take a moment, as someone