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MORNING BUSINESS

(Continued)

RETIREMENT OF CHARLES A. GILLIS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I would like to acknowledge the upcoming retirement of Mr. Charles A. Gillis, who will retire on October 20, 2000, as Branch Manager of the Gulfport Branch Office, United States Small Business Administration (SBA). I know that I am joined by the entire business community of South Mississippi, Charlie's colleagues at the SBA, and all those who have had the privilege of interacting with him over the years.

I especially want to thank Charlie for a long career of completely devoted service to his community, the State of Mississippi, and this Nation. I have known Charlie for many years and have seen firsthand the substantial impact his extensive knowledge and business expertise have had on countless small businesses and the local economy of Southern Mississippi.

Charles Gillis' ties to the Gulf Coast run deep, as does his record of service and achievement. He is a life-long resident of Harrison County and a graduate of Gulfport High School. Charlie served in the First Cavalry Division in Korea in 1951. He received his Bachelor

of Arts in Business Administration from the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), and later completed additional graduate studies in business at the USM-Gulf Park Campus.

Prior to serving with the SBA, Charlie was a small business entrepreneur in his own right, as owner and operator of Gillis Furniture in Gulfport. Moreover, Charlie served as a furniture manufacturers representative with regular travel assignments covering five states. Throughout his private sector career, Charlie honed the business skills that later made him such an invaluable public sector resource to other small business owners and operators.

Charlie began his tenure of service with the SBA in July 1982, and has faithfully served the agency ever since. His service in the SBA's Gulfport Branch Office is especially important to me since the branch office was created after Hurricane Camille devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast and its economy in 1969, and during my service as Administrative Assistant to then Congressman William Colmer.

Charlie has been recognized for his continuous dedication to duty and his tireless community spirit. Over the years, he has been chosen as one of the "Outstanding Men in America," recognized as among the "Personalities of

the South," and selected as "SBA District Employee of the Year."

In addition to personal accolades and longstanding official service, Charlie generously has given of his time in many ways to improve his community. He served as President of the University of Southern Mississippi's Alumni Association, as Chairman of the Harrison County Election Commission, and as Vice President of Governmental Affairs for the Gulfport Area Chamber of Commerce. Moreover, Charlie is an associate member of Delta Sigma Pi Fraternity, and serves as a Mason, a Shriner, Rotarian, and a charter member of Trinity United Methodist Church in Gulfport.

Charlie's constant professionalism and vast knowledge will be greatly missed by the Small Business Administration, the South Mississippi business community and officials at every level of government, who have had the distinct pleasure and benefit of his insight. Whenever called, Charlie always responds in a timely and effective manner with eagerness, efficiency and courtesy. Although I know he will miss daily interactions with his co-workers and colleagues, I also know that Charlie, his wife Rose, and their family, will have many opportunities to focus their abundance of energy and exemplary community spirit.

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Michael F. DiMario, *Public Printer*

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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