TRIBUTE TO ED MARSTON, PUBLISHER OF THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Ed Marston, who recently stepped down from the post of publisher of the High Country News, after serving in this role for nearly 20 years.

I understand that Ed is staying on with the paper for a little longer as a senior journalist, and that his wife, Betsy Marston also is staying on as editor of the Writers on the Range, a syndicated column service created by High Country News.

The High Country News has focused on the balance between the resource bounty that the west provides, all the people who have a stake in those resources, or realize that bounty, and the importance of proper management of those resources. Over the years, the paper has become a notable part of the journalism of Colorado and other western States—and Ed and Betsy Marston have become synonymous with its probing coverage and analysis of environmental and natural resource issues. Under their leadership, the paper has become essential reading for everyone—policy makers, business people, government agencies, and students of the west—seeking to understand what is involved in these issues and why they so often prompt passionate views.

As publisher, Ed Marston has worked hard to provide space for diverse voices and diverse views of people who share a love for the west even though that love takes different forms. The High Country News does not just examine issues and controversies from a purely theoretical or rhetorical perspective. Instead, it tries to obtain and report the perspectives of people who are directly affected, whether they raise cattle in New Mexico, live in timber-mill communities, or keep stores in small western towns. At the same time, the paper never lets its readers forget that these perspectives are part of a larger context of issues related to proper management of our public lands and the need to protect them while preserving the opportunity for people to make a livelihood from them.

The paper was founded by Wyoming rancher Tom Bell. Ed and Betsy were involved in its relocation to Paonia, a small town in scenic Delta County, on Colorado's Western Slope. From there they have maintained a west-wide focus—covering issues related to pacific northwest salmon, farming in southern California, timber policies in Idaho and Montana, and such Colorado staples as water projects and wildlife management. I know many other Coloradans share my pride that a paper of such renown is based in our state. I know that the staff and journalists at the High Country News will continue the legacy of Ed Marston and will continue to be a part of the ongoing debates and challenges we face in the west. I wish Ed all the best and hope he and Betsy remain engaged in public policy debates and will continue to work to protect and enhance the western landscapes that we all cherish.

A column written by Paul Larmer, interim publisher of the High Country News, about Ed's tenure as publisher of the paper follows.

HE SEES THE SOCIETY BEHIND THE SCENERY

I first met Ed Marston when I was a wet-behind-the-ears, wannabe journalist starting an internship at the funky little newspaper called High Country News. It was January 1984, less than a year after the paper had moved to Paonia, Colo., from its birthplace in Lander, Wyo. I arrived fresh from the nation's capital, where I had quickly learned that, despite my college ambitions, I was not cut out for the grinding life of an environmental lobbyist on Capitol Hill.

Paonia, with its orchards and mountains and partially boarded-up two-block downtown, seemed the perfect antidote to Washington, D.C. So did a job working on an environmental newspaper that covered the most blood-stirring wildlands left in the country.

My first impression of Ed Marston was this: How can this man be the publisher of a Western environmental rag? Ed was quiet-spoken, bookish and clearly from the East Coast, despite the sideburns and unruly hair. But after a few days working in the dingy, creaky-floored rooms of HCN's downtown office, my perception began to change. The man possessed a quiet intelligence and a razor-sharp editing pen. He also seemed to know how to operate the paper's only computer. Editor Betsy Marston (Ed's wife) and I pounded out copy on typewriters.

Ed worked that Radio Shack computer hard. Issue after issue, he wrote long articles and essays, tackling everything from wilderness and water to mining and logging. He admitted that he was plunging in where he ought to fear to tread; he lacked the background of HCN's earlier generation of environmentalist editors. Yet the growing power of his words showed he was a very quick study.

It also became apparent that Ed's interests were far broader than the public-lands issues that had long been the paper's meat and potatoes. One of my first assignments was to find out how rural hospitals were faring in the grim energy bust that had settled on the region's rural communities. I thought it was an odd story for HCN. I had come to write about the environment, not health care. Yet the story was interesting, and it opened my eyes to the people and communities that live next door to the public lands. The land has a human context that cannot be ignored even if you care more about the wild than about humanity. That lesson stuck with me long after I left Paonia in late May. I carried it, and the memory of mountain air thickened with the smell of blossoming cherry trees, through graduate school and even through a stint at the Sierra Club in San Francisco.

And I still had it when I returned to Paonia in 1992, this time as a husband, father and assistant editor, with a desk in HCN's new office, across the street from the old one.

The paper's circulation had grown—from a hard-core 3,000 subscribers to nearly 10,000—and it was more sophisticated. Ed no longer wrote every other cover story; he had help from an extensive network of freelance writers and photographers.

Yet Ed's ever-expanding vision of the region remained central to the operation. Environmental issues remained at the core of HCNs coverage—stories about lawsuit-wielding activists and right-wing, anti-government conservatives continued. But a more diverse menagerie of Westerners started appearing in these pages: green-hearted ranchers and blue-collar environmentalists, hotel workers, economists, historians, and scientists of all stripes.

Since then, Ed's expanded vision of environmentalism in the West has become embedded in this place. High Country News' editors and writers now look for the story beyond the story, for the strings that bind the West to itself and to the world, as a matter of course. I can hardly talk about any event without asking: ''So what does this mean for the West?''

That may make for dull conversation around the family dinner table, but it nurtures an important dialogue for those of us who live in this unique and rapidly changing part of the country. For this, and many other fine things not mentioned here, I thank Ed Marston.

HONORING RON JAMES, MARINE VETERAN AND OUR INTREPID DEFENDER OF THE AMERICAN FLAG

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, as the 107th Congress draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a great friend of the American people, a Marine Veteran, and our nation's intrepid defender of the American Flag, Mr. Ron James.

Mr. James, who we also know as Mr. Ronald M. Sorenson, a Marine veteran of the Korean War era, and a great friend is a true American Patriot. Ron has dedicated his life to preserving, the core values of what our great nation stands for and for more than two-decades has educated our nation on flag etiquette, while paving the way and leading our nation in seeking a constitutional amendment prohibiting the desecration of our flag, the symbol of our great nation.

Ron is a familiar face in the halls of Congress where he regularly visits our offices to seek our support for his noble endeavors. In addition to fighting for our flag, Ron also fights for the rights of our veterans and is active in numerous veterans organization and assists patients in our VA hospitals. Over the past twenty years Ron has walked thousands and thousands of miles carrying our flag, to garner support for not only a constitutional amendment protecting it from desecration, but also to raise awareness of its importance to our nation's youth.

Following the horrific events of barbarity perpetrated against our nation by forces of true evil on September 11, 2001, Ron met with me to discuss legislation that would benefit the families of our everyday American heroes. On March 14, 2002, I sponsored H.R. 3968, the Fallen Heroes Flag Act of 2002, which provides a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol to the immediate family of our nation's brave firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency medical technicians (EMT) and to other relief and rescue workers whose lives are lost in the line of duty. This important legislation ensures that our future generations of public servants who may pay the ultimate price for their service to our nation and to our communities are accorded the respect and honor that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ron's hard work and dedication that enabled us to turn an idea into a reality with our ''Fallen Heroes Flag Act of 2002.'' This is yet another selfless act of patriotism by Ron James, a true friend and a great American who lives his life to serve our nation, our veterans, and our flag.