

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE
LARRY COMBEST

SPEECH OF

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 19, 2003

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be here tonight. I am honored to have served in the House of Representatives as a colleague of an outstanding Member of Congress, the gentleman from the 19th District of Texas. I have been especially privileged to serve on the House Agriculture Committee under the chairmanship of LARRY COMBEST. Chairman COMBEST's example of leadership, commitment and integrity serve as a model for all of us in Congress, especially those of us who care deeply about agriculture.

When I came to Congress, I knew it was important to me to be associated with people who understood and cared about agriculture and the farmers and ranchers of America. It was my honor to become acquainted with Chairman COMBEST. He has been a mentor for me since that time of my arrival seven years ago.

Those of us who represent agriculture in the House of Representatives are a minority. There are not enough of us, so what it takes is people who go beyond their numbers, who more than 1 out of 435 can make a difference.

And the gentleman from Texas has done that because he is knowledgeable and understands the issues. Agriculture is in his blood. That is where he comes from. It is who he is. Farming and ranching is LARRY COMBEST. And he is a leader; he cares about using that information and knowledge on behalf of those engaged in everyday activities trying to earn a living on America's farms and ranches.

Mr. COMBEST's leadership in the Committee on Agriculture is extraordinary. It is just something that we have relied upon and at times perhaps taken for granted. As we worked our way through a farm bill in this last Congress, it is clear to me that because of his leadership—and sometimes only because of his leadership—things happened.

LARRY COMBEST has a commitment to what he believes in, and he believes in farmers and ranchers. He wants to see our family farms survive and prosper. He wants that rural way of life to continue. He has a commitment to serving his constituents and to helping American agriculture be here today and tomorrow.

Perhaps most importantly, he has integrity. I have never known anyone I could trust more than LARRY COMBEST. His word can be taken for what it is, his word. What he says is what he means. His advice is honestly given. I have never known him to mislead anyone. And it was that character and that integrity that made it possible for us to do things in agriculture on this House floor. People trusted him, they respected him, and they honored what he was about.

As he returns home to Texas, it is with some sadness that we see our friend LARRY COMBEST leave. We all invest in other people in this place. Often I suppose we spend too much time worrying about things that are not so important. But the thing that is important is the relationships, friendships, and understandings that we have with other Members of Congress. I consider it the highest honor to have been associated with LARRY COMBEST during his term as a Member of Congress.

His relationships with other Members of the House will not end with his departure. His friendship with President Bush has been beneficial to those of us who care about rural America, and we look forward to his continued involvement in issues that matter to us and to farmers and ranchers across the country.

Public service is something that we all talk about and engage in as Members of Congress, but we would do well to learn from the example of LARRY COMBEST. He exemplifies the role of a true public servant, who did what he thought was right, who fought the fight and made a difference on behalf of his constituents, on behalf of all Texans, and on behalf of the people of America.

Mr. Speaker, I wish both LARRY and his wife Sharon the absolute best in their future years. I thank them both for their friendship. I honor and respect them, and I hope the fish bite. Thank you, LARRY.