

would look in his office and see all of the books stacked up, I would think, there is a guarantee he will never leave me because he just can't bring himself to pack up all those books. But now he is going to have to, I think.

Another one of Ed's loves is music. One of his favorite musicians is singer-songwriter John Hiatt. Ed even persuaded Susan to include a John Hiatt song at their wedding, entitled "Have a Little Faith in Me."

Over 17 years, I have come to have more than a little faith in Ed Greelegs—not just his knowledge but his character and his decency. What I know about him is that you never have to worry about his motives. You never have to wonder if his advice is crafted to serve himself or a friend more than it serves the common good. His goal has always been the same: He wants the best for the people of Illinois and the best for America. When things go well, as they often do when Ed is involved, he doesn't really care who gets the credit.

They say that behind every successful man is a surprised mother-in-law. I can tell you that behind every good Senator is a talented chief of staff. For the last 17 years, it has been my good fortune to have my friend Ed Greelegs in that critical position in my office. I am grateful to him for all he has done for me, for Illinois, and for our Nation. I wish him the very best as he begins the next chapter of his career. I am sure it will be a successful chapter.

As you wander around Washington, you come to understand that there are some people whom everybody likes. Ed Greelegs is one of those people.

My favorite story, which I want to add at this point, involves the first trip to Afghanistan after the Taliban were deposed. I joined with Senator Daschle and a number of other Senators. We went in on the first daylight landing at Bagram Air Force Base in Kabul in Afghanistan. It was very tense. There were armored personnel carriers in every direction and troops with weapons to defend us as we came off the C-130. As I came down the ramp and got into an armored personnel carrier, there was a man in civilian clothes standing there.

He asked: Are you Senator Dick Durbin?

I said: Yes.

He said: I am a friend of Ed Greelegs'.

I couldn't believe it. Here I am in the middle of a war zone, and I ran into a friend of Ed Greelegs'.

Whether it is war or peace, whether it is on the Hill or off, time and again, everybody knows that Ed Greelegs is genuine. He is the real thing. I have been honored to have him at my side for 17 years. I wish him the very best in his future pursuits.

Thanks, Ed.

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, Senator LANDRIEU and I come to the Senate

floor for a painful—for us—but necessary task, and that is to live up to our wager with colleagues from the great State of Illinois and congratulate them on the Bears' defeat of the New Orleans Saints in the NFC championship game.

Of course, the Bears won fair and square 39 to 14, but that score really doesn't reflect how the game was actually played. It was much closer than that for a long time. The Bears' defense played exceptionally, hats-off to them, strong pass rush that really put the Saints' quarterback, Drew Brees, in some precarious situations. They also played overall a really tough physical game, defensively and offensively. Because of some of the bone-crunching hits delivered by the Bears' defenders, the Saints had multiple turnovers, and certainly that was part of the problem from the Saints' perspective. But, really, I think the Chicago Bears won the game because of their incredible ability to manage field position. Each time the Saints' offense took the field, it appeared as if they had their back to the wall, including when a safety was scored against them.

So congratulations to the Chicago Bears. Again, Senator LANDRIEU and I are here to fulfill our commitment and pay our debt. By the way, we just served Senator BARACK OBAMA's staff a lunch of great Louisiana food, and we are about to do the exact same thing for Senator DURBIN and his staff.

But as we give the Bears their due, I know both Senator LANDRIEU and I also want to praise the Saints for an absolutely unbelievable season with the biggest turnaround in NFL history, going from a 3 in 13 last year to the NFC championship game this year. Much more importantly than just that, they serve as a wonderful example of renewal and rebuilding from which we all can learn and emulate in terms of the rebuilding of the gulf coast.

A lot of folks say it is just football, it is just sports, but particularly in the context of everything folks in the greater New Orleans area are going through post-Katrina, the Saints meant an awful lot to us this season, and their example of leadership and integrity and great turnarounds and commitment is something we all took pride in and I think something we all learned from. That example is going to be repeated in many other different walks of life as we spur on our recovery on the gulf coast even further.

So with that, Mr. President, I again congratulate the Chicago Bears. I congratulate our two Senate colleagues from Illinois. I wish them all the best in this Sunday's Super Bowl. But I also note, maybe they are going to need that good luck because they face another New Orleans powerhouse, Peyton Manning, in Miami. So good luck to them.

I yield the floor to Senator LANDRIEU.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Speaking in my capacity as a Senator from Min-

nesota, I will say that our team, the Vikings, went four times and never won the Super Bowl, so there is always hope.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for joining me this morning to deliver some delicious, piping hot, and very spicy red beans and rice that he and I cooked through the night to deliver to our colleagues, Senator OBAMA and Senator DURBIN. I would like to personally congratulate the Bears on their victory and say it was a hard-fought victory during a great game of icy and cold conditions, but our Saints stood up under the tremendous pressure of their defensive line.

As Senator VITTER said, the final score doesn't reflect the battle that was actually played that day on that field. But we congratulate the Bears on their victory and look forward to watching them in the Super Bowl this Sunday.

But to the Saints, I have to say again, as I have said several times on this Senate floor, thank you for being so reflective of and mirroring the spirit of the people from Louisiana, from New Orleans, from the region, and from south Louisiana who have struggled, and like you, have been fighting back to bring our cities and our communities, large and small, urban and rural, back from the brink, in many cases, of utter destruction. The Saints have shown us the way, having experienced themselves as players and family members the loss of their homes, the loss of their places of worship, the loss of the schools where their children attended but, like so many hundreds of thousands of citizens, have literally marched their way back to victory. So we are very grateful for their inspiration and their encouragement, every member of the team.

But to the Bears, led by Rex Grossman, who proved himself to be a Super Bowl quarterback, to, again, their extraordinary defense on the field, we congratulate them.

Senator VITTER and I love pizza. We were looking forward to that Chicago pizza, but we ended up, because of what happened, having to deliver our local favorite, red beans and rice, to Senator DURBIN and Senator OBAMA. But our congratulations to them and to the people of Chicago and to the citizens of Illinois who, I know, will be pulling for their team.

I also want to say we will be looking forward to seeing Peyton Manning on the field. He is a wonderful quarterback from a great family in New Orleans that has also helped us and inspired us a great deal.

HONORING GEORGE OMAS, CHAIRMAN, POSTAL RATE COMMISSION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President. I rise to mark the retirement from Federal service, of a loyal friend and Mississippian, and a fine public servant, George Omas.

Word has reached me that George will soon be leaving the Postal Rate Commission, where he has been serving as Chairman since November 2001. His leadership at the helm of that agency, which oversees the revenues and expenses of the U.S. Postal Service and recommends the appropriate postage rates, has done much to restore financial confidence in the Postal Service.

September 11 and the accompanying anthrax attacks rocked our U.S. Postal Service with unplanned for expenses to such a degree that an increase in rates were badly needed to offset those expenses without reducing services to the American people. When the Postal Service made their request to the commission on September 24, 2001, George made history by thinking truly "outside the box" and proposed something never done before but was highly needed at the time: a "settlement agreement" of a major rate case. No small task as it required the Postal Service, the Postal Rate Commission and almost 100 interested parties and representatives of the mailing industry to agree to forgo lengthy litigation of the pending case and meet and work out differences together.

He was told it was "impossible" there was too much money at stake for parties to waive a good portion of their due process rights to achieve such an agreement. But, he felt strongly that September 11 was an extraordinary event and it called for extraordinary thinking on everyone's part, so on the first day of the hearings in that case after he had read his opening statement, he added these remarks:

I have often heard it said that there could never be a settlement in an omnibus rate case. There are too many conflicting interests, and too much money is at stake. But it seems to me that if there was ever a time when 'business as usual' was not an attractive course of action, and when cooperative efforts to promptly resolve issues through settlement might be the right course of action, that time is now.

To everyone's surprise, even their own, the parties responded. In approximately two and a half months the many diverse interests that frequently bitterly contest multiple issues in postal rate cases were able to negotiate, revise, and submit a stipulation and agreement as a proposed settlement. Instead of the normal 10 months, the entire case was initiated, negotiated and agreed to within 6 months.

In the 2002 Annual Report of the Postal Service, the Postmaster General and the Chairman of the Board of Governors explained the effect of those momentous remarks:

And, following a suggestion by the chairman of the Postal Rate Commission, we approached our major stakeholders and took a bold step that enabled us to implement new postage rates in June, 2002, rather than in the fall. This gained us an additional \$1 billion in revenue. As a result, and despite the impacts of the recession and the terror attacks, we were able to close the year with a loss that was almost \$700 million below original projections and half of last year's. None of the \$762 million the Administration and

Congress generously appropriated to the Postal Service to protect the security of the mail was used for operations.

George took the success of that effort and encouraged the Postal Service to look beyond the historical friction existing at their two agencies and focus on new ways to help the Postal Service continue to be successful. The Postal Service initiated a number of so-called negotiated service agreements and the commission and interested parties processed such agreements that brought in new volumes of mail and additional revenues to the Postal Service thus, extending the time needed between rate increases.

George has been a very successful chairman at the commission and I want to note his departure. I hope the legacy he leaves behind in the postal community and indeed, throughout government, is one of innovative thinking and the knowledge that working together can solve seemingly insurmountable problems.

So now that I have told you about George and the good things he has done, as a good Senator, I want to take credit for his good work by saying that I have known George since our days together at The University of Mississippi and that he served on my staff at various times in my career, including my time on the former House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service. When President Clinton nominated George as Postal Rate Commissioner in 1997, I was very pleased to introduce him at his confirmation hearings and give him my support. Needless to say, I was even more pleased when President Bush designated George as chairman of the commission in 2001.

George comes from good folks; his sister and her husband Bernadine and Ralph Marchitto, his niece Debra Lynn Wren, her husband John and George's grand niece Rebecca Elizabeth Wren still reside in the Biloxi area. Almost everyone who lived in Biloxi in the 1950s to the 1980s knew his parents, Violet and Pete Omas.

I will add that while George may be leaving the Postal Rate Commission, I don't believe he will go far, he has too much left to offer and I look forward to continuing to follow his future successes.

IRAQ

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I have listened intently over the past few weeks as the President, members of his Cabinet, and Members of this Chamber have discussed Iraq, the war on terror, and ways to strengthen our national security.

For years, now, I have opposed this administration's policies in Iraq as a diversion from the fight against terrorism. But I have never been so sure of the fact that this administration misunderstands the nature of the threats that face our country. I am also surer than ever—and it gives me no pleasure to say this—that this

President is incapable of developing and executing a national security strategy that will make our country safer.

Unfortunately, Mr. President, because of our disproportionate focus on Iraq, we are not using enough of our military and intelligence capabilities for defeating al-Qaida and other terrorist networks around the world, nor are we focusing sufficient attention on challenges we face with countries such as Iran, North Korea, Syria, or even China.

While we have been distracted in Iraq, terrorist networks have developed new capabilities and found new sources of support throughout the world. We have seen terrorist attacks in India, Morocco, Turkey, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Spain, Great Britain, and elsewhere. The administration has failed to adequately address the terrorist safe haven that has existed for years in Somalia or the recent instability that has threatened to destabilize the region. And resurgent Taliban forces are contributing to growing levels of instability in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the U.S. presence in Iraq is being used as a recruiting tool for terrorist organizations from around the world. We heard the testimony of Dr. Paul Pillar, former lead CIA analyst for the Middle-East, a few weeks ago in front of the Foreign Relations Committee. He said, and I quote:

The effects of the war in Iraq on international terrorism were aptly summarized in the National Intelligence Estimate on international terrorism that was partially declassified last fall. In the words of the estimators, the war in Iraq has become a "cause celebre" for jihadists, is "shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives," is one of the major factors fueling the spread of the global jihadist movement, and is being exploited by Al-Qa'ida "to attract new recruits and donors." I concur with those judgments, as I believe would almost any other serious student of international terrorism. [January 10th, 2007]

Retired senior military officers have also weighed in against the President's handling of this war. Retired commander of Central Command, General Hoar, testified in front of the Foreign Relations Committee last week. This is what the general said:

Sadly, the new strategy, a deeply flawed solution to our current situation, reflects the continuing and chronic inability of the administration to get it right. The courageous men and women of our Armed Forces have been superb. They have met all the challenges of this difficult war. Unfortunately, they have not been well served by the civilian leadership. [January 18th, 2007]

If we escalate our involvement in Iraq or continue the President's course, that means keeping large numbers of U.S. military personnel in Iraq indefinitely. It means continuing to ask our brave servicemembers to somehow provide a military solution to a political problem, one that will require the will of the Iraqi people to resolve.

Escalating our involvement in Iraq also means that our military's readiness levels will continue to deteriorate.