

Rehnquist spoke up, again, in his 1997 Year-End Report on the Federal Judiciary. It was a salvo from a Republican Chief Justice critical of the Republican Senate leadership:

Currently, 82 of the 846 Article III judicial offices in the federal Judiciary—almost one out of every ten—are vacant. Twenty-six of the vacancies have been in existence for 18 months or longer and on that basis constitute what are called “judicial emergencies.” In the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, the percentage of vacancies is particularly troubling, with over one-third of its seats empty.

Judicial vacancies can contribute to a backlog of cases, undue delays in civil cases, and stopgap measures to shift judicial personnel where they are most needed. Vacancies cannot remain at such high levels indefinitely without eroding the quality of justice that traditionally has been associated with the federal Judiciary. Fortunately for the Judiciary, a dependable corps of senior judges has contributed significantly to easing the impact of unfilled judgeships.

It was only after the scorching criticism by a Republican Chief Justice that the Republican Senate majority modified its approach in order to allow some of the nominations that had been held back for years to finally proceed. Having built up scores of vacancies, some were allowed to be filled while the Republican Senate majority carefully kept vacant circuit court positions to be filled by President Clinton’s successor. It is in that context that Republican claims of magnanimity must be seen for what it was. It is in that context that the 8 circuit confirmations in 2000 must be evaluated while the Republican Senate majority returned 17 circuit nominations to President Clinton at the end of that session without action.

By contrast, the Democratic Senate majority has worked steadily and steadfastly to lower vacancies and make progress, and we have. When Senate Republicans allow the Senate to confirm President Bush’s Sixth circuit nominees, we will have achieved the average number of circuit confirmations the Republican Senate majority achieved in presidential election years and lowered circuit vacancies to an historically low level.

Further, the Republican effort to create an issue over judicial confirmations is sorely misplaced. Americans are now facing an economic recession, massive job losses of 232,000 in the first 3 months of this year, increasing burdens from the soaring price of gas, and a home mortgage foreclosure and credit crisis.

Last month, the Commerce Department reported the worst plunge in new homes sales in two decades. The press reported that new home sales fell 8.5 percent to the slowest sales pace since October 1991, and the median price of a home sold in March dropped 13.3 percent compared to the previous year. That was the biggest year-over-year price decline in four decades. You would have to go back to July 1970 to find a larger decline. Sales of existing homes also fell in March, as did em-

ployment and orders for big ticket manufactured goods, both of which fell for the third month in a row.

Unfortunately, this bad economic news for hard-working Americans is nothing new under the Bush administration. During the Bush administration, unemployment is up more than 20 percent; the price of gas has more than doubled and is now at a record high national average of over \$3.94; trillions of dollars in budget surplus have been turned into trillions of dollars of debt, with an annual budget deficit of hundreds of millions of dollars. According to a recent poll, 81 percent of Americans today believe that our country is headed in the wrong direction. It costs more than \$1 billion a day—\$1 billion a day—just to pay down the interest on the national debt and the massive costs generated by the disastrous war in Iraq. That’s \$365 billion this year that would be better spent on priorities like health care for all Americans, better schools, fighting crime, and treating diseases at home and abroad.

In contrast, one of the few numbers actually going down as the President winds down his tenure is that of judicial vacancies. Senate Democrats have worked hard to make progress on judicial nominations, lowering circuit court vacancies by almost two-thirds from the level to which the Republican Senate majority had built them. Any effort to turn attention from the real issues facing Americans to win political points with judicial nominations is neither prudent, nor productive.

RECOGNIZING L. ROBERT KIMBALL

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to recognize an outstanding Pennsylvania citizen, L. Robert Kimball.

In 1953, L. Robert Kimball opened the doors of a surveying and civil engineering consulting company in Ebensburg, PA. Under Mr. Kimball’s leadership over the past 55 years, L. Robert Kimball & Associates has grown from a 2-person outfit to a 600-person firm which now oversees nearly 1,200 projects a year in 14 offices across the United States.

L. Robert Kimball’s leadership has not gone unnoticed. Among his many commendations are the Outstanding Engineering Alumnus Award and the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Pennsylvania State University, the Western Pennsylvania Family Business of the Year Award from the University of Pittsburgh’s Katz Graduate School of Business, and the Small Business Person of the Year Award from the Small Business Association.

I will conclude by commending the four guiding principles that Mr. Kimball instills in each his staff: have a goal, be persistent, know when to change direction, and enjoy your work.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

SYDNEY POLLACK: IN MEMORIAM

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of a very special man, Sydney Pollack of Los Angeles County, who died May 26, 2008. He was 73 years old.

Sydney Pollack was a master filmmaker and will be fondly remembered for his over four decades of work in Hollywood as a director, producer, and actor.

Sydney Irwin Pollack was born to Rebecca and David Pollack on July 1, 1934, in Lafayette, IN. He was raised in South Bend and moved to New York City in 1952 to study at the Neighborhood Playhouse. While there, Sydney so impressed head acting teacher Sanford Meisner, that Mr. Meisner quickly made Sydney his assistant. Sydney went on to teach at the Neighborhood Playhouse from 1954-1959, guiding the talents of actors such as Robert Duvall, Rip Torn, Brenda Vaccaro, and Claire Griswold, whom he married in 1958.

At the urging of Director John Frankenheimer, Sydney left New York City in 1961 for Hollywood where he began work as a director of television shows. In 1965, Sydney made his movie-directing debut in the suicide help-line drama, “The Slender Thread” with Sidney Poitier and Anne Bancroft. In 1969, Sydney received his first Best Director nomination for an Academy Award for the film “They Shoot Horses Don’t They?”

As an actor, Sydney’s key roles include Woody Allen’s “Husbands and Wives,” 1992, Robert Altman’s “The Player,” 1992, and Stanley Kubrick’s “Eyes Wide Shut,” 1999. Sydney’s most notable acting and directing role was in his 1982 comedy film “Tootsie” in which he played George Fields, agent to the main character played by Dustin Hoffman. His production company, Mirage, produced this film as well as many others, most recently “Michael Clayton” in which Sydney gave yet another memorable performance.

Perhaps Sydney Pollack’s biggest directing triumph came in 1985 with “Out of Africa.” This landmark film received seven Academy Awards—Best Picture, Director, Adapted Screenplay, Cinematography, Original Score, Art Direction, Sound—and three Golden Globe Awards—Best Picture, Supporting Actor, Original Score. “Out of Africa” was also an example of one of the great collaborations of all time between actor and director. Sydney Pollack and Robert Redford made seven classic films together that include “This Property Is Condemned,” “Jeremiah Johnson,” “The Electric Horseman,” “3 Days of the Condor,” “The Way We Were,” and “Havana.”

Those who knew Sydney Pollack recognize him as a courageous, innovative and brilliant man. He took pride in tackling social issues through films which raise interesting and challenging

questions. His work as an ambassador of cinema will be remembered gratefully by all those whose lives he touched. He touched mine, and he will be deeply missed.

Sydney is survived by his wife Claire Griswold, and their two daughters, Rachel Pollack Sorman and Rebecca Pollack Parker.●

THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. AMBROSE HOUSING AID CENTER

● Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I congratulate the St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center on its 40th anniversary. Since 1968, it has grown from its original mission to confront the "blockbusting" practices harming Baltimore's neighborhoods to providing a myriad of services to more than 100,000 Baltimoreans as our oldest nonprofit housing provider.

St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center was founded in 1968 by the dynamic and tenacious Father Vincent Patrick Quayle, known to all as Vinny. The center is dedicated to creating and preserving affordable housing in Baltimore. Its many successes are due to the charismatic and effective leadership of Vinny Quayle and the tireless efforts of a dedicated staff.

In the 1970s, St. Ambrose initiated a rental program and converted several vacant Catholic school buildings into affordable apartments. This effort led to neighborhood revitalization in many Baltimore communities. Today, St. Ambrose owns and manages 350 single and multifamily affordable housing units serving very low-income households, households with special needs, and the elderly.

When Baltimore experienced a gentrification movement in the 1980s, many low income families, especially those renting their homes, feared they would be displaced. St. Ambrose led the way in helping tenants convert to homeownership and was instrumental in convincing Baltimore City to establish a "Tenant's Right of First Refusal" bill.

Two other programs were established that have become core services at St. Ambrose. The Homesharing Program, the only one in Maryland, matches householders with room to share with homeseekers who need affordable housing and are willing to provide help with household tasks or financial support. The Legal Services Program helps homeowners and tenants combat home improvement fraud and predatory lending practices.

St. Ambrose partnered with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, and bought, renovated and sold Federal Housing Administration, FHA, properties to first-time homebuyers. Through its Homeownership Counseling Program, St. Ambrose serves more than 700 prospective homebuyers every year, with 100 of them purchasing a home within 6 months of completing housing counseling.

As the numbers of subprime mortgages and foreclosures have increased, St. Ambrose has stepped forward to help homeowners save their homes. Expert housing counselors provide assistance to homeowners in a number of ways and staff attorneys are available to provide legal review and action.

I am most proud to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center on its 40th anniversary and ask my colleagues to do the same.●

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM ODOM

● Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today I would like to commemorate the life of a great soldier, strategic thinker and American, LTG William Odom. I was deeply saddened to learn of his recent sudden death.

General Odom served our country with honor and distinction throughout his life. During his time serving as a military adviser in the White House, Director of the National Security Agency, and West Point and Yale professor, General Odom demonstrated an uncanny talent for assessing and advancing U.S. interests in a complex and challenging world.

Over the years, the U.S. Congress has benefited greatly from General Odom's clear vision of U.S. interests in the Middle East. General Odom was a strong critic of the Iraq war even before it began. It is unfortunate that more Members of this body did not heed his insightful and prescient warnings of the perils of invading Iraq. His steadfast commitment to ending the war and restoring a balanced and focused national security strategy has been an inspiration. So, too, was his strong opposition to the President's illegal warrantless wiretapping program.

Our thoughts are with his wife, son, and family during this difficult time. I hope that they can take some comfort knowing that he will be deeply missed by a grateful Nation.●

REMEMBERING BILL CLARK

● Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, today I honor the life of a great Arkansan, William E. "Bill" Clark, who passed on May 15, 2007. Bill was respected as a great philanthropist, sportsman, business leader and citizen of Arkansas. He was seen as an unparalleled advocate for the needs and welfare of his State and its citizens. He dedicated his life to serving his community and supporting individual lives in the public and private sector.

Bill graduated from Little Rock Central High School in 1961 and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1965 with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. Thereafter, he joined his brothers at C&C Electric Construction Company in Little Rock, working there until 1981 when he acquired Bragg's Electric Construction Company. In 1987, Bill partnered with

Dillard's Incorporated and founded CDI Contractors, which grew to be one of the largest construction firms in the South. High-profile projects completed by CDI under Bill's leadership include the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock, the headquarters for Heifer International in Little Rock and Immanuel Baptist Church in West Little Rock, of which Bill was a devout attendee for over 27 years. Bill's impact on the business community of Arkansas is evident by the numerous business and professional awards he received, including Arkansas Business Executive of the Year, Rotary Club of Little Rock's Business and Professional Leader of the Year Award, Paul Harris Fellow as given by Fifty for the Future, election to the Arkansas Construction Hall of Fame, and admission to the University of Arkansas Engineering Hall of Fame and the Arkansas Academy of Electrical Engineering.

Respected and admired throughout Arkansas for over three decades, Bill took on countless worthwhile projects with optimism and enthusiasm; he was an inspiration to many. The positions he held relating to public service are evidence of his commitment to his community. His awards reflect his professional successes as well as his avid public service. These awards included the Arkansas Arts Center's Winthrop Rockefeller Memorial Award, the Boys and Girls Club of America National Service to the Youth Award, the Edwin N. Hanlon Memorial Award for Contribution to the Arts, and the Arkansas Children's Award from the Arkansas Sheriff's Youth Ranches.

Bill was a past president of the board for the University of Arkansas board of trustees, the Arkansas Arts Center, the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Country Club of Little Rock. Bill served as a board member of the Little Rock Boys and Girls Club, the Arkansas Arts Center Foundation, Baptist Health, the UAMS Foundation, Ouachita Baptist University Business Advisory Council, and the Episcopal Collegiate School Foundation.

During his lifetime, Bill was an enthusiastic outdoorsman. He loved hunting, fishing, and golf, while remaining committed to conservation endeavors. A final gesture honoring Bill and benefiting his community is the establishment of the William E. "Bill" Clark Presidential Park Wetlands, a 13-acre tract located on the banks of the Arkansas River running adjacent to the Clinton Presidential Library. This natural wetland area provides an educational exhibit that can be enjoyed by State, national, and international visitors for generations to come. As contractor for the Clinton Presidential Library, Bill believed in the library's mission to strive for educational advances within Arkansas, including the history of the United States, the institutional roles of the Presidency and the American political system as applied to President William J. Clinton.