

# TRIBUTE TO SHERIFF MEARL JUSTUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, my home county of St. Clair, IL, lost a dedicated public servant this week. Mearl Justus—aptly named “justice”—passed away Tuesday at the age of 81. He had retired only 1 week earlier after serving eight terms as St. Clair County sheriff.

Mearl Justus was a legend. He was funny, he was innovative, and he was a creative thinker who was always looking for new and better ways to run his department. Above all, he was deeply dedicated to the people he served in the county.

An editorial in the Belleville News-Democrat described him as “a 6 feet 2 inch teddy bear with a sailor’s vocabulary and a hero’s heart. He was gruff. He was endearing. He was a champion, rescuing us from the bad guys for 60 years.” What an epitaph.

He got off to a rocky start in life. He was 19 months old when his dad died, and he was raised by his grandparents. He was a high school dropout in 1953 when the mayor of Cahokia, IL, suggested he join the local police force. That is how the aptly named Mr. Justus began his nearly 60-year-long career in law enforcement.

He started as a part-time officer in the Cahokia Police Department. He earned his GED and went on to earn an associate’s degree at Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville and then earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice. He advanced quickly up the ranks and served as Cahokia’s police chief for 22 years. He ran for sheriff of St. Clair County in 1983 and won—his first run for elective office. He would be reelected seven times, never losing an election, and nobody came close.

Sheriff Justus loved his job and loved having fun. One of the most legendary tales of his years as sheriff was when he sent notices to several hundred fugitives from justice telling them they had won a free pair of sneakers from the fictional Nabbar Shoestore. When the scofflaws turned up to claim their sneakers, the sheriff’s department locked them up. The department made over 50 arrests that day and 1 the next despite the fact that the prior day’s arrests had been widely reported in the news.

He closed up shop with a sign that read: “Closed. Catch ya next time.” He once explained to a reporter, “In this business, to keep from going off the deep end, you need that humor.”

Mearl Justus didn’t drink or smoke and rarely carried a gun because he said it was bulky and “it tears my clothes up.”

He sold advertising space on patrol cars and put public service announcements on their fenders. He provided jail inmates with a garden to grow vegetables. The prisoners grew their produce and gave any extra to local nursing homes.

Sheriff Justus was so dedicated to his work that he and his wife Audrey lived

for years in a three-bedroom apartment above the county jail. He said he figured that is where he was needed. At first, the couple found the routine cell checks a little disturbing, but they grew fond of their living arrangement and even raised a granddaughter in their apartment.

Over the course of his six decades of public service, Mearl Justus established several programs for local schools, including Stranger Danger awareness training. He also introduced the D.A.R.E. Program in the St. Clair schools long before others had it.

Sheriff Justus’s success and dedication were widely admired by his peers, who elected him president of the Illinois Sheriffs’ Association. He was also chairman of the board of his region’s Major Case Squad.

In recent years Sheriff Justus led efforts to combat crime and vandalism on MetroLink trains, the county’s light rail transit system, making the system safer for those who depend on it. That is where I came to know him. You see, this MetroLink is a light rail train service that has been one of the most popular things that has happened in that region. I grew up in that region. I used to kid my friends from St. Louis that I grew up in a suburb known as East St. Louis, and they all laughed because nobody considers Illinois to be part of St. Louis.

Well, it turned out that station in East St. Louis for MetroLink was a critical part of the political agreement that led to the creation of this important light rail system. But we had a problem. East St. Louis has been notoriously dangerous for years, and there was a question: How in the world could we expect anybody to wait at the train station with all the dangerous street crime in East St. Louis?

Mearl Justus stepped up. His St. Clair County Sheriff’s Department provided the protection that was needed to establish that MetroLink station in my hometown of East St. Louis and to give people the peace of mind that if they wanted to board or leave a train or park their car there, there would always be reliable law enforcement. Mearl Justus showed the way for many of us when we couldn’t think of how to resolve this quandary. That is the kind of problemsolver he was.

Mearl Justus had an amazing sense of humor. For many years, his own Web site featured the sheriff wearing a sombrero and a boast that any local event featuring Mearl Justus as the master of ceremonies would draw twice as many people.

He cared deeply about the people. He hosted “Slumber in the Slammer” fundraisers for a women’s crisis center, allowing people to sleep in the jail in exchange for a donation to the local crisis center. He once arranged cataract surgery for a woman whose savings had been stolen.

He said he looked forward to coming to work every day and wanted people to think of him as an honest, people-

oriented public official. He is going to be remembered for that and so much more. Mearl Justus made St. Clair County not just a safer place but a better place. I am honored to have known him. He was a fun person to be around, but you knew that when it came to his job, he took it very, very seriously.

My wife Loretta and I send our condolences to his wife Audrey, his daughters Kay and Debra; and his three granddaughters and three great-grandchildren.

## RETIREMENT OF ILLINOIS STATE SENATOR JEFFREY M. SCHOENBERG

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my friend, Illinois State Senator Jeff Schoenberg, on his more than two decades of service in the Illinois General Assembly.

Jeff was elected to the Illinois House in 1990 at the age of 30. He served six terms there before being elected to the Illinois Senate in 2003, where he rose through the ranks, serving as assistant majority leader, chairman on the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability, and vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee. More importantly, Jeff Schoenberg has been a dedicated public servant to his constituents in Evanston and to the people of Illinois for 22 years.

During his time in the Illinois General Assembly, Jeff sponsored a bill that would provide better access to quality health care and give consumers the opportunity to make better choices for their health. He also secured more than \$5 billion in Federal funds for safety net hospitals such as Mount Sinai, Mercy, and Holy Cross.

Jeff Schoenberg supported the Illinois Safe Choice Zones Act, which helped pave the way for Illinois’ pioneering work in stem cell research, and insisted on greater accountability and oversight at the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority.

A father of two himself, Jeff was critical to the passage of a measure allowing schools to keep and administer epinephrine for anaphylactic shock following the death of a 13-year-old girl from Chicago who had an allergic reaction to peanut oil while at school.

Jeff also understood foreign policy issues, including support for legislation to divest State pension funds from foreign countries doing business with Iran and drawing attention to the genocide in Cambodia. Jeff visited Cambodia last month as part of a delegation representing the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Incoming State Senator Daniel Biss will have large shoes to fill given how well Jeff has served the Illinois Senate’s Ninth District. Since the outset of his political career, Jeff has been inspired by the likes of Congressman and Federal Judge Abner Mikva and U.S. Senator PAUL SIMON, for whom he and I both worked.

Jeff’s dedication to service now takes on a new focus in improving the lives

of children and families through an expanded role advising the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation on its philanthropic endeavors. His approach to this work is made clear by something he said just last year:

My position in the Senate is only one point of entry into public service.

As Jeff moves into his new role, I can only say to him: Thanks for being my friend and my ally in so many good causes. While you may be retiring from the Illinois State Senate, your constituents and I know that you will never retire from working for the public good.

Thanks to Jeff Schoenberg and his family for all they have given to our State.

#### MAYOR JOHN REDNOUR

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to wish Mayor John Rednour of Du Quoin, IL, a happy 78th birthday and to thank him as he prepares to retire after so many great years of public service to his town and Illinois.

John Rednour, known to most people as simply Rednour, has served as mayor of Du Quoin since 1989. Public service was his third career. He started work as an ironworker, a member of the United Ironworkers. He worked on projects in St. Louis and in Chicago and served as site superintendent during construction of the U.S. Federal penitentiary in Marion.

In 1970 John moved to Du Quoin with his wife Wanda and three kids. In the early 1980s John began his second career when he and some local shareholders took control of the Du Quoin State Bank, converting it into a community bank that served downstate Illinois. Today the bank stands as one of the strongest in our State, and John remains the bank's chairman.

But it was John Rednour's work as mayor of Du Quoin that really distinguished his public service. In his 23 years as mayor, he focused on balancing the city's budget and investing in its infrastructure. His legacy to Du Quoin includes construction of the Poplar Street overpass—a major thoroughfare for travel on Highway 51 through southern Illinois—improved water service and the development of an industrial park. He managed to do all of this with a balanced budget, creating new opportunities for his community even in tough times.

He is a member of the five-person Illinois State Police Merit Board and a proud Democrat, I might add, but he knows there are some things that need to be done on a bipartisan basis. He has made it his habit to meet with the Du Quoin city council members and offered to take advice from each and every one of them. He told them to always vote for what is good for Du Quoin.

Loretta and I consider ourselves lucky to count John and Wanda Rednour among our friends. We have

many happy memories of State fair parties at the Rednour home during our trips to the Du Quoin State Fair. Loretta and I have been regular visitors to Rednour's home and have warm memories of staying overnight after the fair party and having Wanda greet us at breakfast with her so-called Texas pancakes—and they could fit in the State of Texas.

As a labor leader, businessman, mayor, husband, and father, John Rednour has contributed enormously to Du Quoin, downstate Illinois, and to our entire State and Nation. While his day-to-day presence in city hall is going to be missed, residents of Du Quoin can take comfort in knowing that John Rednour's leadership is still in their community, with a strong foundation and a bright future.

In addition to three children, John and Wanda are blessed with five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, who I am sure are going to be glad to have more time with John and Wanda now.

I thank John for his many years of distinguished public service. Loretta and I wish him and his family all the best in retirement. We look forward to many more stories and more pancakes in the years to come.

#### THE S.S. BADGER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Chicagoans were asked in a recent poll to identify the one asset in the city of Chicago that meant the most to them. The overwhelming vote was for Lake Michigan—not surprising.

Lake Michigan is the primary source of drinking water for more than 10 million people—not just in my State of Illinois but in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan. It supports a multibillion-dollar fishing industry that is important to local economies. And it is beautiful. It is a recreational asset for swimming, kayaking, boating, or just taking a walk along the beach. It is a gorgeous lake.

I always look forward to getting up to Chicago. We have a condo that overlooks Lake Michigan that I consider to be a great place to sit and just look at this beautiful lake and what happens on it, whether I am drinking a cup of coffee in the morning with my wife or a glass of wine in the evening.

But, unfortunately, the health of our great Lake Michigan is threatened every summer when a coal-burning ferry boat dumps tons of coal ash into the lake every day, all summer long.

Meet the S.S. Badger. Many people have fond memories of this boat, the S.S. Badger, steaming from its homeport of Ludington, MI, to Manitowac, WI, every summer. But they need to be reminded of one thing: The S.S. Badger is the last coal-fired ferry in the United States, and there is a reason it is the last one.

Every year, based on the estimates given to us by the company, this boat dumps 600-plus tons of coal ash into

Lake Michigan—600-plus tons every year since 1953. That is their record. What does that do to Lake Michigan? In the 59 years the S.S. Badger has been in operation, it has discharged a conservative estimate of 35,400 tons of coal ash into Lake Michigan. That is enough to coat the entire floor of Lake Michigan with a layer of ash 2½ inches thick.

A recent article in the Chicago Tribune did a comparison of the amount of coal ash discharged from the Badger to the dry cargo residue discharged by all other vessels operating on Lake Michigan. Here is what they found:

Fifty U.S. ships and 70 Canadian ships on Lake Michigan are responsible for a combined total of 89 tons of solid waste dumped every year. That is 120 ships, 89 tons in a year. The Badger by itself is responsible for almost 6 times more waste than these 120 vessel combined, even when using the most conservative estimate of what the Badger dumps overboard during the course of a summer.

Yesterday the EPA vessel general permit that has enabled the coal-fired car ferry S.S. Badger to discharge coal ash into Lake Michigan expired. The owner of the Badger insists that the coal ash is basically just sand. We know better.

Scientists are concerned about coal ash because it contains such things as arsenic, lead, and mercury. Once in the lake, these chemicals enter the food chain through the water we drink and the fish we eat, and then they accumulate in our bodies and are associated with cancer and reproductive and neurological damage. We know how dangerous mercury contamination in fish is to human health.

Well, it is time for the S.S. Badger to stop adding to the problem and either clean up its operation or close it down. If the Badger's owners had only recently realized that dumping coal ash was a problem, it might be OK to cut them some slack. But the Badger's owners have a long history of avoiding the steps needed to clean up their act.

Most other vessels of the Great Lakes converted from coal to diesel fuel before the Badger made its first voyage. In 2008, when conversion to a new fuel was way overdue, the Bush administration granted the ferry a waiver to continue dumping coal ash through 2012. That was 5 years too many of toxic dumping by this boat, but to make matters worse, the Badger's owners still have not made any reasonable efforts to stop dumping coal ash in the lake.

Now they are attempting to persuade the EPA to give them just 5 more years to take a look at this problem. After I came out in opposition to this 5-year extension, the Badger's owner asked to meet me in my office. I, of course, agreed. He said he was applying for an EPA permit to continue dumping coal ash while he looks for ways to convert the Badger to run on liquefied natural gas. He wanted to make the Badger, he