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Senate

(Legislative day of Friday, September 22, 2023)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of our weary years and silent tears, we continue to believe in Your sovereignty.

As we edge closer to a government shutdown, we choose to believe that You are still in charge. We continue to believe that the hearts of our lawmakers are in Your hands and You turn their plans as You desire. We continue to believe that in everything You are working for the good of those who love You and that Your purposes will prevail.

Lord, we pause to thank You for the life and legacy of Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN. May her death teach us to number our days, that we may have hearts of wisdom.

Have Your way, Lord—have Your way. You are the potter. We are the clay.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask that the Senate observe a moment of silence in honor of Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN.

(Moment of silence.)

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President—the first woman President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate—earlier this morning, we lost a giant in the Senate.

Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN was one of the most amazing people whoever graced the Senate, whoever graced the country. She had so many amazing, wonderful qualities wrapped up in one incredible human being. She was smart. She was strong. She was brave. She was compassionate.

But maybe the trait that stood out most of all was her amazing integrity. Her integrity was a diamond. Her integrity shone like a beacon across the Senate and across the country for all to see and, hopefully, emulate.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN would typically say, when you asked her how was she voting on something: Let me study this issue before taking a position. Let me go home and read on it. And when she came back, if she believed the cause or the vote was right and vital to any issue she cared about, she not only voted for it, there was no stopping her in getting it done.

She would take on any force, any special interest, any opponent with relentless integrity and would wear those opponents down until she succeeded. Again, her integrity just shown through them. And she won and she won and she won and each time made the country a better place.

I saw this up close when she passed the assault weapons ban, a passion of hers after what happened to her in California. The NRA was a relentless, often mean-spirited and chauvinistic foe. They oozed vitriol against her. But they didn't scare her. They didn't stop her. And they failed against her. Like most of her opponents, they failed against her. Her perseverance, her strength, and most of all her integrity shown through.

I was privileged to carry the bill in the House after she had passed it in the Senate. She guided me every step of the way, and her strength and her integrity strengthened all of us who were fighting that uphill fight.

As we went through that bill, it became clear to me, DIANNE FEINSTEIN is not like the others. She is in a class of her own.

Of course, it wasn't just the assault weapons ban she fought her. Her accomplishments also included championing the Violence Against Women Act, protecting oversight authority during the investigation into U.S. torture, fighting for climate justice, fighting for marriage equality, fighting for reproductive justice—the list goes on and on.

As chair of the Intelligence Committee, DIANNE fought for what was right. Even if it was hard and difficult and took months and years to dig in and find out what actually went wrong, she never stopped.

She took on the CIA and inserted Congress's oversight authority during the investigation into the United States' use of torture.

Through all of her accomplishments—this one and all the others—she always displayed quintessential grace and strength. None of these “sons of guns” against her ever rattled her.

I remember a few years back, when a particularly nasty Senator tried to put

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Senator FEINSTEIN down in a condescending—many would say—chauvinistic way. She reacted not defensively but with strength and poise and integrity. And within 3 minutes, she put this colleague in his place. By the end of it, everyone in the room, on both sides of the aisle, was smiling. That was DIANNE to a tee—powerful, prepared, unflappable.

She had to be. Whenever she did something, she was often the first to do it. She was elected as the first woman president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the first woman to serve as mayor of San Francisco, the first woman to serve as U.S. Senator for California, the first woman to chair both the Senate Rules and Intelligence Committees, the first woman member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The list goes on and on and on and on.

Our Nation will be forever thankful to Senator FEINSTEIN for the accomplishments she fought for.

I, too, am personally indebted to DIANNE, not just as a colleague—which, of course, I am in so many ways as a colleague—but as a friend and as a father of two daughters.

DIANNE's work extended far beyond the U.S. Senate floor, as she gave a voice, a platform, and a leader to women throughout the country for decades.

DIANNE didn't just push down doors that were closed for women, she held them open for generations of women after her to follow her.

She gave a voice, a platform, and a model for women across the country who aspire to roles in leadership in public service who want to leave their own mark on the world, who want to make this country a better place for others.

Today, there are 25 women serving in this Chamber, and every one of them will admit they stand on DIANNE's shoulders.

So DIANNE's impact extended far beyond the Senate floor and far beyond politics itself.

Today, we grieve. We look at that desk, and we know what we have lost. But we also give thanks—thanks to someone so rarefied, so brave, so graceful a presence that someone like that served in this Chamber for so many years.

In closing, let me just say this: The sign of a leader is someone who dedicates the whole of their spirit for a cause greater than themselves; the sign of a hero is someone who fights for others, who endures for others no matter the cost, no matter the odds; and the sign of a friend is someone who stands by your side to fight the good fight on good days and on the bad.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN was all of this and more, a friend, a hero for so many, a leader who changed the nature of the Senate and who changed the fabric of the Nation—America—for the better.

As the Nation mourns this tremendous loss, we are comforted in knowing how many mountains DIANNE moved,

how many lives she impacted, how many glass ceilings she shattered along the way. America—America—is a better place because of Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN.

Today, I join with my colleagues in mourning our beloved friend and colleague.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The Republican leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, you know how we always refer to each other as “my friend” from whatever State it is. Honestly, frequently, that is not true.

But Elaine and I were actual friends of Dick and DIANNE. Elaine served on a corporate board with Dick for a number of years. When they were in town together, we would frequently have dinner together.

Elaine and I got married shortly after the 1992 election, and I remembered that DIANNE gave us a small depiction of the Capitol. I looked at it this morning because it is still on the wall and remembered our dear colleague as a truly remarkable individual.

As the majority leader has pointed out, she was an incredibly effective person at every line, at level, and she was at all of those levels on the way to the Senate.

Those of us who were fortunate to call DIANNE our colleague can say we served alongside the longest serving female Senator in American history.

DIANNE was a trailblazer in her beloved home State of California, and our entire Nation is better for her dogged advocacy and diligent service.

Over the past three decades, the senior Senator from California was also the steady hand leading sensitive and consequential work as head of the Intelligence Committee and the Judiciary Committee. Her name became synonymous with advocacy for women and with issues from water infrastructure to counterdrug efforts.

Of course, as the first woman to lead her hometown board of supervisors and then govern as mayor, she was making history and making a difference long before she came to the Senate.

And as much as this institution and the American people will remember DIANNE's devoted public service, as I indicated earlier, Elaine and I will also remember and cherish the friendship of 30 years we were fortunate to share with DIANNE and Dick.

So, today, I know the entire Senate family is gathering around Senator FEINSTEIN's loyal staff. Our thoughts and prayers are with DIANNE's daughter Katherine, her granddaughter Eileen, the entire Feinstein family, and with

all who mourn our dear colleague and friend.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, before I yield to the President pro tempore, I would like to acknowledge DIANNE's daughter Katherine with Speaker PELOSI in the Gallery.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

REMEMBERING DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, yesterday, the senior Senator from California came onto the floor through those doors to do her job. She voted. She voted to make sure that our country would continue to move forward and not shut down. That was DIANNE. She did her job every day. She cared about her country. She cared about her State. She cared about doing a job, no matter how tough it is, for the future of America, and she did it with dignity and respect every single minute.

Today, you will hear accolades from across the country, lists of legislative accomplishments from her early days, all the way through her career. What I just want to say today: It is a true loss to America. It is a loss to her family.

My heart is with you.

It is a loss to her colleagues from California who have served with her and know her as I do—as a tower of strength—to our colleagues on the floor who have worked with her on a laundry list of legislation that you will hear about and is way too long to list today.

But, to her constituents, you need to know we depended on her just as you did, and she was here every day to fight for you, no matter what. She fought for women. She fought for those who were victims of gun violence. She fought for foreign policy that was remote to most people, but she knew every detail. And when DIANNE spoke, the rest of us stopped and we listened.

Mr. President, she was a friend. I was sworn into office just a few weeks after she was, and she was always there for us, in matters big and small, in matters of our country, in matters of policy, and always as a friend.

To those of you who don't know, she was the most generous Senator I have ever known. I remember one time when I noticed that her purse was really nice, and I said: DIANNE, that purse is beautiful.

Two days later, I got one delivered to my door. That was DIANNE. She saw people. She knew people. She saw that she could be someone whom we all needed, and she saw that she could be there when she was needed—and she was there.

I will have more to say about my friend of more than 30 years over the next few days, and I am sure we will hear so much today. But I am so sorry I didn't hug her when she went back out that door yesterday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Maine.