

lower-priced prescription drugs? Why aren't we working on the farm bill? All of those had wide bipartisan support coming out of committee—all of them—but none of them have been brought up here on this floor.

Maybe it is so everything can just get crammed into the end of the year and get past "the election." But maybe we need to reset our priorities. Let's get the things done that the American people expect us to work on, the hard things, the things that are important, whether it is healthcare, energy, agriculture, policy, the budget, the national defense. Let's address the things that should be addressed, and let's get started. I would be OK with starting today, but let's at least address them next week. But from my understanding of next week's schedule, they are not coming up then either.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

#### TRIBUTE TO JULIE ADAMS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, one of my predecessors in the Senate from Kentucky was a guy named Happy Chandler. He had a legendary career that continued back in the Commonwealth as a two-time Governor, and he was actually the baseball commissioner for a while. He was known for what I found to be a wise observation: You can start too late but never too soon.

That sums up how I feel about the task I began this time last week: publicly thanking the talented people who serve with me in the Republican leader's office. It is not because I am going anywhere anytime soon. It is not because there is any shortage of important work still to be done. I have just had the great, good fortune of leaning on an outstanding staff, and it is never too soon to thank them for their devoted service over many years.

The group I would like to single out for particular praise this afternoon includes some of the longest serving members of my team and some of its newest arrivals, some of the most familiar faces around the Capitol and some of the behind-the-scenes heroes who actually keep us going. Every one of them is essential to the work that we do for Kentucky and for the Nation.

I will begin with someone whose first stint on my team predates my time as Republican leader.

Today, the former Secretary of the Senate, Julie Adams, is a senior leader with administrative responsibilities that touch every corner of this institution, but I will claim credit for first bringing this proud Iowan to the Senate as my deputy communications director.

When Julie left my team the first time, she wisely picked an opportunity I would have a rough time objecting to, and that was working for First Lady Laura Bush at the White House. Well, ever since she got back, I have done ev-

erything I could to keep Julie's numerous talents right here in the Senate. From complex personnel policy to ancient institutional protocol, Julie hasn't met a Senate challenge she couldn't handle with tact and grace. Appointing Julie as Secretary under the last Republican majority was literally a no-brainer. From this desk, I had a front row seat to Julie's professional excellence, but I wasn't the only one.

As I understand it, Julie's daily appearances on the Senate floor were appointment viewing for her parents Harold and Leah. They tuned in from back home, and they have good reason to be proud of their truly exceptional public servant.

So, Julie, thank you so much.

#### TRIBUTE TO GRACE HARRISON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, while Julie has been out amongst the tapestry of the broader Senate, the next pair I would like to thank have been holding down the fort just inside the doors of my Capitol office.

The first person anybody sees when they stop by my office is Grace Harrison, and that is by design. Grace has both the warmth and the poise of a royal and the authoritative confidence of a bouncer. She knows how to make guests feel welcome whether they are Kentuckians stopping by on a family vacation or dignitaries arriving for important meetings. At the same time, she knows how to keep a firm hold on what comes in and out of the office. It is a rare combination of skills and easily takes years to hone, but Grace had it mastered on day one.

As I understand it, it wasn't long after she arrived that Grace also had the names and faces of each of our colleagues committed to memory, and she has wasted no time in taking on extra projects above and beyond the duties of the front office. This isn't at all surprising for someone who, I am told, found time back in high school, amid the demands of academics and extracurriculars, to start up her own business on the side. Well, I am grateful that Grace continues to make it her business to support my entire team so well.

So, Grace, thank you.

#### TRIBUTE TO GADEN JAMES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, if you make it past Grace, you may find yourself striking up a conversation with the other half of my all-star front office, Gaden James.

It usually begins with a detailed account of the incredible history of the room—the very first home of the Library of Congress—but where the conversation goes next is anybody's guess. Gaden is as comfortable discussing the finer points of sport fishing as he is the nuances of Richard Nixon's foreign policy. No matter the topic, you are sure to come away with some new walking-

around knowledge. Perhaps that is par for the course with an alumnus of one of our most erudite former colleagues, Rob Portman.

Gaden has struck a sort of balance few young Capitol Hill staffers manage to achieve. He is both 100 percent present for the tasks at hand and 100 percent committed to honing the skills he hopes to use in his future. In other words, he is not above keeping track of my favorite coffee mug, but he never misses an opportunity to attend a briefing on an interesting topic either. And when the Senate works odd hours, so does my front office team. I am grateful that Gaden has been so willing to burn the midnight oil.

So, Gaden, thanks a lot.

#### TRIBUTE TO KATIE KARAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, if the front office sounds like an energetic place to work, just ask our special assistant, Katie Karam, what it is like helping my senior staff in the back office.

Katie came aboard last year at a particularly busy time for my team. Depending on who you ask, she was either stolen or rescued from the wild world of House campaigns. Regardless, Katie dove headfirst into a tough job: keeping tabs on a chief of staff who is known to come and go from the office via a secret side door, tracking down a national security advisor who is frequently unreachable via phone or email, and taking on extensive other duties as assigned—all with a calm but eager willingness beyond her years.

Katie is a sponge for new knowledge and skills, and my entire staff has come to count on her as a utility player in all kinds of clutch situations.

Katie's contributions in my office follow in a distinguished family tradition of public service, and her loyal commitment to this team is second only to her devotion to her family, whom I know she makes very proud.

So, Katie, thank you.

#### TRIBUTE TO SARAH STEINBERG

Mr. MCCONNELL. Of course, Mr. President, I can't talk about how my office runs with calm efficiency and professionalism without mentioning the great work of my scheduling director, Sarah Steinberg.

Around the Senate, it is considered poor form to recruit all-star staffers away from our colleagues, but when my dear friend Lamar Alexander announced his retirement, I concluded it was fair play for the Kentucky delegation to borrow Sarah's talents from her native Tennessee.

At any given moment over the past 5 years, there isn't anyone who has had a better idea of where I am—or, more importantly, where I am supposed to be—than Sarah. Discretion and attention to detail are her calling cards. Sarah closely guards my confidence and vigilantly protects my time. She spots sensitive situations from a mile away and

steers us through them with the ease of a pro who has seen it all.

Indeed, Sarah has seen it all. From her days at the business end of Senate casework back in Tennessee to her tenure managing some of the most demanding schedules here in Washington, to the job of which I am sure she is most proud: raising two young sons, Connor and Graham, with her husband Shane.

I have been so grateful for Sarah's willingness to juggle it all with such excellence.

So, thank you, Sarah.

#### TRIBUTE TO MOON SULFAB

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I am proud of the way my team thrives under pressure, but when technical difficulties throw a wrench in a busy day, even the coolest heads require a bit of grace. In those moments, there is nobody my team is happier to see than my longtime information administrator of information technology, Moon Sulfab.

Of course, with Moon's capable hands on the wheel, moments of technological crises are few and far between. He plugged in the entire Republican leader's office. He will be the only one to unplug it as well, and every day in between, I have relied on Moon's trust, loyalty, discretion, and skill to keep our entire operation secure. Moon's relentless pursuit of professional development makes him not only an asset for my team but for the entire Senate.

But for every memory of Moon bailing us out of a wonky technological problem, my team recalls countless more times when he was just the friendliest colleague they could ask for. Moon asks after their parents and

their favorite sports teams. He wants to know about their latest travels and regale them with stories and gifts from his own. And his reputation is hardly limited to my office. Around the Capitol, it is well-known that Moon hasn't ever met a stranger.

By his own admission, he is living an American dream, and by his joy for his work, his lifelong love of learning, and his devotion to this institution, Moon reminds those around him that we are as well.

So, Moon, thank you so much.

#### TRIBUTE TO ALEXANDRA JENKINS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, my late friend and former chair of the Ethics Committee, Johnny Isakson, liked to warn folks not to drown in shallow water. What he meant, of course, was that while you are focused on the big picture, you can't forget to dot your i's and cross your t's.

Well, my entire team is fortunate that my office manager, Alexandra Jenkins, took that advice as words to live by.

Alex, of course, is a proud Kentuckian. And as I was reminded during my travels during a State work period, Kentucky is quite proud of her as well.

So is our shared alma mater. It is not uncommon for McConnell Scholars in Louisville to come up to me eager to let me know that they know Alex. I suspect they see in her what my staff saw in her years ago, when she joined the team—a passion for public service and a wisdom beyond her years.

It didn't take long before the selfless initiative that prompted Alex to quietly come into work on Sundays to help Kentuckians secure coveted tickets for White House tours invited even greater responsibilities.

As office manager, Alex is constantly immersed in the minutiae of Senate policy and personnel. Well before an issue arises, she makes it her business to become an expert. When my senior-most staff need honest assessments to make sensitive decisions, Alex doesn't pull any punches. Her competence and composure prevent headaches and quite literally keep our team out of harm's way.

I can't help but recall how, on January 6, while working from home, Alex provided such timely instructions and updates to members of my staff literally locked down in the Capitol that many of them assumed she was there as well.

I know my entire team is grateful for Alex's patience, her friendship, and the biting wit that keeps officemates on their toes.

And behind only her proud mom Debra, I count myself among her biggest fans.

So, Alex, thank you.

For a second week in a row, I close by saying that there are still many more incredibly talented and dedicated public servants that I need to thank publicly in the days ahead. In the meantime, my entire team will continue to do what they do best on behalf of Kentucky and the entire Nation.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2024, AT 3 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The U.S. Senate stands adjourned until 3 p.m. on Monday.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:53 p.m., adjourned until Monday, September 23, 2024, at 3 p.m.